WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN HOLLAND

CORNELIA DE GROOT

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Sincerely yours,
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WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN HOLLAND

BY

CORNELIA DE GROOT

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published, August, 1917

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When I Was a Girl in Holland

5735

Norwood Press
BERWICK & SMITH CO.
Norwood, Mass.
U. S. A.

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WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN HOLLAND

CHAPTER I

WHEN I WAS BORN

On a farm, in the province of Friesland, near the little village of Deersum, I was born on the ninth day of the year. My advent caused quite an excitement, just as that of each of three sisters and two brothers had done previously. One brother had not lived for me to know him.

That same day an elderly woman waddled from house to house all through the village and up the road and across meadows to the farmers. She knocked at the doors, called "Folk in," and when the housewife appeared, extended to her the

greetings of my parents, told her that a little girl had been born to them and invited her to the celebration to be held ten days from then.

I was laid in a big, old-fashioned wicker cradle on rockers, on a soft, downy bed, between snow-white sheets and covered with the softest blankets. Over the whole of the cradle, touching the floor, was draped a cover of heavy green damask, to keep the draft out.

During the next ten days, little blond, red-cheeked girls came trudging through the snow. Some were carrying parcels in their mittened hands, others had flat red-painted boxes. They knocked at the front door, called "Folk in," and were led into the house. They placed the parcel or the box in the hands of the maid and timidly said:

"The compliments of mother, and here is a present."

The present appeared to be a dress, an apron, a petticoat, or a pair of socks, if it

came from a parcel, but if it was taken from a box it was bound to be a large layer-cake or several small tarts, baked by the village baker or bought in the nearest town, and intended for the party. Then the fat nurse would lead the shy little girl to the cradle, push the green cover slightly aside, and ask :

"Isn't baby pretty?"

And the little girl would place her finger in her mouth and nod, "Yes."

"Don't you wish you had such a new baby sister?"

And again she would nod and stammer a faint "Yes," while all the time she was afraid that I might wake up and start to cry. I fear some of these little girls when they said "Yes" and nodded were telling a little fib so as not to hurt my feelings. Now the girl was led into the big living-room and seated on an old-fashioned chair with reed bottom ; on the table before her was placed a dainty, crisp Dutch rusk covered with butter and sugar.

This she ate, that I might grow up into a healthy and strong child.

I had been swaddled around tightly with such a lot of heavy, woolen cloths, from my neck to the ends of my red toes, that I somewhat resembled a cocoon. Thus I was dressed for four weeks ; after that I appeared in petticoats, dress, and apron.

When I was ten days old, I gave my first real party, or rather, it was given by my mother in my honor. At about ten or eleven in the morning, a large number of village women and farmers' wives, some young and slim, others middle-aged and fat, came filling the enormously big front-room. My mother and her guests—about thirty women—were seated around the table in the center of the room. The women belonged to every social rank of our village. They did a lot of talking, and one by one they took me in their laps and chattered, and smiled at me, and they all gave my mother a great deal of advice.

On the table stood several cakes, rich and full of currants. There were also large, decorated layer-cakes, small tarts and deliciously spiced "koeken." A koek is a long cake. And there were many sorts of cookies. But the most important part of the feast was the cup with "boerejongens" or farmer-boys. Now, don't be horrified! These good women were no cannibals; they did not eat little boys. The "boerejongens" were only boiled raisins steeped in brandy, to which sugar and spices had been added. The old-fashioned, beautifully wrought silver cup had somewhat the shape of a loving-cup, and was filled and emptied several times. From this cup the "boerejongens" were dipped with a solid silver spoon into the glasses near the plates of the guests.

In former times, no glasses were used, and the cup with the tablespoon did the rounds from guest to guest; helping himself, each person drank a spoonful when his turn came. But in later years people

became finical and each preferred a glass with a small spoon to himself.

And so the women feasted and chattered and gave advice and laughed at each other's jokes until it was time for them to go home at about three or four in the afternoon.

Like my sisters and brothers, I received as a present from my parents a large, beautiful, solid silver tablespoon with my name and date of birth engraved on it.

Scene in the Village of Deersum.

Birthplace of the author of this book.

Church in Deersum.

CHAPTER II

MY BABY BROTHER

THE next great event in my life, and the first one that I can remember, was the birth of my baby brother. I was three years and six months old.

One morning, while my sister Anna, who was seven, and I were sitting on a piece of wood in the big yard, she said to me:

"A new baby brother came this morning."

Now I suppose I should have been very happy and excited and smiling all over. I am sorry to say such was not the case. I looked somber and thoughtful and did not show any interest. Later in the day, the hired girls and the men who worked on the place asked me whether I was not glad with the baby. They teased me

They said that the newcomer was taking my place and that I no longer was "mother's darling," all of which I took very much to heart. Naturally I began to look upon the baby as an intruder. I refused to see him, and when I finally, mastered by the nurse, gazed at a tiny red creature unlike anything I had ever seen before, my whole soul was in rebellion. The idea that such a small, insignificant-looking piece of humanity should wield such a power! That he should have taken my place in the family and everybody be his slave!

One day I saw the old family doctor enter the house with my father. I did not at all feel friendly towards him, for I suspected him of having brought the baby. I stuck my head under the table and from out the corners of my eyes looked at him to see whether he was bringing any more children. I was relieved to notice that he carried no parcel. But perhaps he was hiding one under his

coat. So I stole another glance at him, which reassured me that I had nothing to fear.

I also suspected a neighbor, the mother of many children, of having something to do with my brother's arrival. Therefore, when she brought me some candy, I refused to accept it and even tore her dainty, black silk apron.

As the days went by I became less resentful and even came to like the child. Sometimes, when he cried, I was entrusted with the task of rocking the cradle. But I was warned not to rock too hard, or the same thing might happen to him as had happened to me when I lay in the cradle, which was this: My sister Anna often had to rock me to sleep. She was very industrious and worked with all her might and strength. One day, when I was unusually cross, she rocked harder than ever. Bang, the cradle tumbled over. I fell out of it and on top of Anna, who had slipped, and the

cradle with the covers on top of us. I instantly stopped crying, but now it was my sister who cried. She yelled at the top of her voice. So now, when it had become my duty to rock the cradle, I was warned from time to time not to be too energetic.

CHAPTER III

OUR HOUSE

Our house, like nearly all Dutch houses, was built of tiny bricks on a deep, firm foundation. It was by far the oldest house in and around our village, and one of the gables was covered with ivy.

Like all the farmhouses of our province, the rooms and barns were built under one high, steep roof of tiles. The part containing the rooms was supposed to be about three hundred years old; the rest had been rebuilt in the year 1780. Yet in spite of the venerable age of the house, the windows were larger than those I have seen in many cottages of rural United States. We had two cow-stables, one had stalls for twenty cows with two standing in one stall, and the

other could contain twelve cows and heifers and two horses.

That part of the house which was the barn proper and which we called "schuur" was used largely for the storing of hay, but it also contained the family carriage, the tilbury (which is a vehicle on two high wheels and with a seat for two persons), the work-bench, tools, harnesses, two hay-wagons, a churn-mill, two maize and linseed and bean mills, one horse-stable, spaces for calves, etc. The carriage and the tilbury were covered with big pieces of heavy muslin to protect them from the dust.

Some farmers had separate coach-houses, but we were not quite so fortunate. Only a small part of the floor of the schuur was brick-paved ; the rest was of earth. The dairy contained the big churn, which, through the wall, was connected with the churn-mill in the schuur. There was also a large cellar for the milk.

Our living-room was big. Three of its

walls were covered with white, glazed tiles, which were washed off once a week, and once a year the mortar between the tiles was whitewashed. The fourth wall was wainscoted; two wall-, box- or closet-beds and a china-closet were built into this wall. Beneath each closet-bed was a cellar with doors. The closet-beds had doors, too, which during the day were always closed, and behind the doors hung colored and flowered curtains. At night we opened one of the two doors each box-bed possessed, but the curtains were seldom pushed entirely aside, for fear of draft and cold. Even in the modern homes in Friesland one finds these unhygienic closet-beds.

The enormous fireplace was built against, and not inside, one of the tiled walls. The wooden base of the very wide chimney stopped a couple of feet below the ceiling; it was about three feet by six and ended in a mantelpiece. This mantelpiece was adorned with

pretty plates and bowls of old china. But below the mantelpiece, over a slanting board, hung, in the winter, a sort of curtain about a foot in width; it was part cotton and part leather and on it were printed landscapes and people; in the summer a more pretentious curtain of printed muslin stiffly starched and accordion-pleated was fastened around the mantelpiece. Farther up, the chimney narrowed until it changed into a brick top on the roof. Inside the chimney, at about the height of the ceiling, were laid some yellow-painted boards so as to make the opening smaller and keep out the draft.

The floor beneath this big chimney was covered with an iron slab painted black. Against the tiles, some of which were decorated with pictures of fat cherubs blowing trumpets, stood a black-painted iron slab about three feet by four and rounded at the top. It must have weighed somewhere between two

hundred and three hundred pounds. My father told that once his mother employed a young girl who carried the slab back and forth as if it were a toy. Years ago a fire burned on this hearth, but long before I was born stoves had come into use and increased the comfort of the people.

We washed the woodwork of our living-room once a week with warm soap-suds, and cleaned the windows inside and out, and the window-sills and the casements inside and out, with fresh water, so that they always shone as bright as bright could be. All the chairs, tables, wardrobes, etc., were polished on Saturdays. The ceiling, painted dark red, as was the other woodwork, and washed off every few weeks, was supported by very heavy beams. The paneled wall, above the box-beds, was decorated with a row of very large, heavy, blue and white plates of old chinaware, and some pretty, old, china bowls.

When I was a baby, the floor of this room was of green, glazed tiles; these being rather cold, even though always covered with matting and rugs, were later taken out and a wooden floor was put in. This floor was painted a glossy red. Each day we mopped it with a large, square piece of heavy cotton, called a "dweil" and a bucket of water fetched from the moat. After that, we polished it with wax. A large rug lay under the table, and this was taken up and shaken once a week. A strip of matting lay the length of the room in front of the paneled wall, and over this in front of the doors of the closet-beds and the china closet, as also in front of three other doors, lay small rugs. The latter were shaken each day; the matting was taken up and beaten as well as washed off on both sides with hot soap-suds every Friday. Of the Frisian housewives may truly be said that their work is never done.

The immense front-room was wall-papered instead of tiled, but its floor had retained its glazed tiles, which were covered with a carpet and over this lay one large rug and several small rugs. The paneled wall, the doors and ceiling were painted light green. The chimney was even bigger than the one in the living-room. In the center of the room stood a mahogany table. This front-room was so cold and damp that even during the summer we often had to build a fire in the stove to prevent the furniture and other things from being spoiled. In fact, the whole house was very damp; shoes and clothes in the closets would become thoroughly mildewed and even the bread in a very few days would become thoroughly spoiled by mildew. We had to wage constant war against moisture.

Our house being so very old, in some places the ceiling was not strong. My younger brother, discovering such a "weak spot," just for the fun of it, as

boys will do, jumped on it. Suddenly, to his great surprise, down he went, in a cloud of dust, and fell on the floor of the little cow-barn. Unlike the Katzenjammer boys, he needed no tools to break through a ceiling. Fortunately, he was not hurt.

Besides, the house was not only too small for us and our belongings, but the builder evidently had had only one idea in his mind, and that idea was to make it as inconvenient and unpractical as possible and to make housekeeping as hard and laborious as it could be made. When I was no longer a child, the whole house was taken down and in its place erected an up-to-date Frisian farmhouse, much larger and far more convenient than the old one; roomy and with many large windows.

It was no more than natural that we should possess many queer, old-fashioned utensils. We had several brass and copper kettles, and two brass lamps in which

Rear view of our new farmhouse

Cow-stalls in our new farmhouse.

we burned strings of twisted cotton with rape-seed oil. One of these was a hanging lamp and was used in the cow-barns together with a modern lantern; the other stood on a brass foot and was used for carrying around in the house, being safer for that purpose than kerosene lamps. The rape-seed oil was kept in a brass can. All these brass and copper utensils were polished every Saturday.

One of the attics contained such queer things as high silk stovepipe hats, old-fashioned swallow-tail coats and knee-breeches of black satin; large, old man's shirts of home-made linen; these things had once been worn by some of our ancestors; there also was mother's hoop-skirt, worn by her when she was a young girl. We children always played with it, when, during the spring house-cleaning, it was taken down into the yard for an airing.

In the attic were also a couple of brass bed-warmers or warming-pans with long

brass handles; and there was a bowl and pan which once had been used for the making of mustard. In our front-room we had quite a collection of dainty cups and saucers, teapots, creamers, sugar-bowls and such things; these had come down to us from former generations. We never used them. They were taken out of the shallow closet with its glass door only to be washed off once in a while by mother herself. Often we were offered high prices for them by travelling merchants, but my parents did not want to part with them for any amount of money.

Paper window-shades were unknown in Holland. We had wooden blinds for our windows; some on the inside, others on the outside. In the summer, we had lace curtains; in the winter curtains of a heavy cream-colored cloth, the bottom part of which was embroidered in a pretty design and edged with fringes or crocheted point-lace. The latter could

be lowered or rolled up at will, but they were usually hanging a little below the middle of the windows, and the interior of the room was protected from the curious gaze of strangers by a row of flower-pots.

Outside, in front of each door, was a pavement of from three feet square to four or five times that size. These pavements, made of small, white bricks were scrubbed every day or once a week and kept as clean as possible. We were not allowed to walk on them with our wooden shoes. When we wore leather shoes, we first had thoroughly to rub them clean on rather thin, white, cotton "dweils"; one of which lay in a corner of the pavement and another in front of the door. And around these pavements one might see stationed the wooden shoes of all the members of our family.

For fuel we used mostly turf or peat, but in the winter also quite a lot of anthracite coal or coke. Turf, however, we

always used for cooking. We had modern heating stoves, which, in comparison to their small size, gave a great deal of heat, took up little space, were very neat and of nice appearance, and were of no danger to little children. In these we could not burn peat.

We bought our turf from the turf-skippers. There were two kinds; one, soft, fibrous, brown, much longer than it was thick and wide. We called it long turf and it had been dug out of the soil. The other was dark blue, almost black, as wide as it was long and two or three inches thick. We called it hard turf and it was dredged out of pools, laid to dry on the fields and cut into squares. It did not ignite half so quick as the long turf, but it lasted much longer, and when it became all aglow, it was often placed in a small stone pot called "test" in a foot-warmer, or underneath old-fashioned copper coffee-pots; even kettles of water were heated and often food was

cooked on these hot coals. They were very unhygienic, taking the oxygen out of a room and replacing it with carbonic acid.

We also had a "doofpot," which was a copper vessel with a brass lid. When after dinner or supper we no longer needed a big fire, we put the remaining hard coals, be they entirely or partly glowing, in this receptacle. The replacing of them in the stove, a few of the softest fibres of the long turf, and a burning match, were all that was necessary to start a new fire in a few moments. This contrivance was not only a great convenience, but it cut down household expenses. It prevented waste. The lid on the doofpot was very tight-fitting, so that not a bit of smoke could escape, nor could any air reach the coals to keep them burning.

The little foot-warmers called "stoven" and used so much by the women, were wooden stools perforated on top and one

side was missing. Inside was a "test" containing a glowing hard turf. The men-folks and we children used foot-warmers that were much longer, flatter, and wider and covered with an iron slab. The one we children used was large enough for three pairs of little feet, and with room to spare. It was a very welcome article on winter evenings and mornings.

The house, yard, and orchard were surrounded partly by a moat or narrow canal and for the rest by a corral, a fence and a hedge of hawthorn. In the yard stood, part of the time, one or two high stacks of hay, for lack of space in the schuur; also a wooden outhouse for two cows and a brick pig-sty. On one side of the sty, by way of a lean-to, stood a brick chicken-run with windows, while the roost was over the sty. There was a wooden chicken-house in the orchard.

This orchard was bordered by rows of pollard willows, plane trees and poplars

and ashes; it contained forty apple and pear trees and one plum tree, all for home use. The grass grew luxuriously among them, and there were also a small flower garden and rose-bushes. A large lawn was hedged off for the bleaching of the family linen. For each week, when the clothes had been washed and boiled, the white pieces were bleached on the grass for two days, after that rinsed and hung on a line or racks to dry.

We had a lot of tame ducks, and wild ducks joined them once in a while. As early as February we placed baskets of braided straw, in the shape of an hour-glass but with one end closed and rounded, the other open, in the trees; some in the pollard willows about four feet from the ground; others in the poplars and ashes about twenty feet from the ground.

To reach these baskets in order to gather the eggs, we had to climb on a ladder. Now, I have often told people

in this country that our tame ducks laid their eggs in these baskets and they would laugh and say that tame ducks cannot fly. But our ducks did fly a little. They could fly high enough to get into these baskets. Sometimes chickens, too, would get into them. And sometimes the cats, but then there was trouble. And once in a great while a skunk, and then there was still more trouble!

CORNER OF LIVING-ROOM IN OUR NEW FARMHOUSE.

The walls are tiled.

LIVING-APARTMENT IN OUR NEW FARMHOUSE.

In the tree is a duck-basket.

CHAPTER IV

HOW WE DRESSED

I SUPPOSE you think that all Dutch girls look like those with the long skirts and the winged caps that artists like to draw for books and post-cards. The fact is that while some have this picturesque attire, the great majority are dressed quite differently and very variedly.

As for myself and playmates, our many pieces of loose and heavy underclothing made us appear very round and fat and clumsy. We wore a flannel shirt without any shape, next a loose chemise of muslin, then a knitted "borst-rok" or breast-skirt of worsted or cotton yarn according to the season; on top of this a "lyfje" or underwaist, next something resembling a corset-cover made of either woolen or cotton material. Each

and every one of these garments was thick and heavy.

Our dresses were made of durable woolen goods, usually dark-colored. Sometimes, in warm weather, I wore a calico dress. White dresses were out of the question. And how I did long for one! The nearest I ever came to having my wish fulfilled was the present of a yellow old dress that had first been owned by one of my sisters and that now I was allowed to appear in while playing around the house and helping with the hay harvest.

On Sundays I wore a big, white apron; on week-days one that was striped, checkered, or flowered. We had long sleeves—in our dresses, I mean—or, in case of short sleeves, wore long knitted bands that reached from above the elbow to the wrist. Our parents were always afraid that we might catch cold.

We seldom received more than one dress a year. Clothes were made so that they could be lengthened and widened; they

had to last a long time and were frequently patched. I usually had one dress for best, which I wore only a few times during the first year, when its status was lowered to that of Sunday dress. Next came the school dress and the meanest and oldest of all was the play and work dress. Sometimes I had school and play dresses made out of those outgrown by my sisters.

On my feet I always wore woolen stockings and over these black or dark blue socks of a heavier worsted. The socks served two purposes. They not only kept the feet warm, but prevented them from becoming sore from rubbing against the hard wooden shoes or klompen, and they also made these klompen fit snugly around the feet. Before entering the house, the school or the stores, we always took our klompen off and walked in our heavy socks. On the stone and brick floors of the dairy, milk-cellar, and cow-barns—in the latter only

in the summer time—we all wore leather slippers resembling in shape those worn by the Japanese. Sometimes we put on clean old klompen that were for indoor use only. When going to church, to town, and during the summer if it did not rain we always wore leather shoes, high or low.

My blond hair did not dangle in two braids on my back, as the hair of Dutch girls is supposed to do. I boasted only one braid with a ribbon at the end. A pretty comb prevented stray locks from falling on my forehead. Or my hair just hung loose with a lock near each ear taken up and fastened together with a ribbon on the top of the head. I have seen American girls wear their hair in similar fashion. One day my oldest sister cut bangs for me.

Now I shall tell you how the women of our province dressed. My mother wore a helmet made of the purest, softest gold, and beneath it a white muslin cap with

THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER.

Wearing gold helmet with lace covering

pretty, tightly crocheted border for the back of the neck, and over this—except over the border—one of black silk. When visiting, going to church or to town, mother covered this helmet with a beautiful cap of old lace that had a border of rounded folds standing straight from the neck at an angle of about forty-five degrees.

On top of all these caps she tied an ugly, modern bonnet. How would you like such an elaborate head-gear? But this was not all. Near the ears, and beside the silver and diamond stick-pins, mother had attached to the gold cap ornaments resembling miniature shields or large buttons. Some of the farmers' wives also had fastened on their foreheads silver plates studded with diamonds. Contrary to popular belief, these ornaments, caps and all, were not heirlooms. The wives of the carpenters, bakers, coopers, and other tradesmen, and of small shopkeepers had gold caps, which in most cases,

but not necessarily, were much smaller and resembled two shields fastened together by a chain. They wore no plates with diamonds. The caps of the wives of the day-laborers were made of silver and their clothes were very simple and of coarse, cheap material.

The helmet is called "ooryzer" by the Dutch; this means ear-iron. It took many generations for this ear-iron to reach its present stage. Its very beginning is to be seen in the museum at Leeuwarden, the capital of our province. It was a narrow strip of iron that, centuries ago, in fact, more than a thousand years, was worn by the Frisian women around their heads, by way of a bandeau, from ear to ear; hence its name. As time went by, the band was broadened and the iron replaced by silver and finally by gold for those who could afford the latter.

At last, there evolved the full-fledged helmet, and just when it had reached perfection, its doom was sounded. It began

to disappear. Only elderly women still wear the pretty head-dress of Friesland nowadays. Another generation, and there will be none left. The helmet does not add to one's comfort. It prevents ventilation to a great extent, and my mother often had to take it off because of severe headaches.

At the age of twelve, my mother received her first ear-iron. It was of silver. When she reached her sixteenth year, her parents bought her the golden helmet that to-day, at the age of sixty-eight, she is still wearing. However, in the morning, when my mother did her work, she did not wear the helmet, but a white, crocheted cap only; it was simple, pretty and neat.

Once, when Queen Wilhelmina, at the age of twelve, visited Friesland for the first time as queen, the women of our province presented her with the old-Frisian costume, not only the helmet and accessories, but also the old-fashioned dress

with its pretty fichu, that was worn many, many years ago and now is seen only in historical plays and pageants. The Queen actually wore the whole costume and was photographed in it, to the great delight of the people.

Queen Wilhelmina of Holland.

CHAPTER V

OUR VILLAGE SCHOOL

At the age of five, on the first day of April, I entered the village school. Our schoolhouse contained two rooms; in the larger the master taught the higher grades, in the smaller the woman teacher the lower grades. There were altogether from about forty-five to fifty pupils. No one teacher was ever allowed to have more than forty. With me, two other new pupils, a boy and a girl, were admitted. We were very bashful and timid. We were placed on the row of lowest benches, next to the high windows and nearest the big stove.

The first few days we were a sore trial to the teacher. It was hard to teach us to sit still and be quiet. Also, we had to be taught a new language. Thus far we

had spoken Frisian only; now we had to be taught Dutch. Gradually we learned to make simple strokes and hooks with a slate-pencil on a slate, and such truths as that one and one make two, and one and two make three.

One wall of our schoolroom was almost entirely covered with pictures. It was from the upper row of these pictures that we were to learn the alphabet, and it took us almost a year to do so. It went this way. The teacher fetched the first picture, representing a rose, and fastened it onto the blackboard. Rose in Dutch is spelled "roos" and pronounced very similar to rose in English. The teacher would ask: "What do you see on this picture?" We answered: "A roos." Then she asked: "What sound do you hear when you say 'roos'?" And we were expected to answer "oo." She wrote "oo" on the blackboard and it was for us to remember that this funny-looking mark represented the "oo."

Next came the "r" and then "s." We pronounced the consonants as they sounded and not by their alphabetical name. Then we had to repeat r-oo-s, r-oo-s, quicker each time until the three letters came rolling off our tongues in such rapid succession that they sounded like the word "roos."

The second picture was fetched at some future lesson. It represented a pear. Pear in Dutch spells "peer." Thus we learned the vowel sound, "ee," and the consonant, "p." The next step was the making of other words, some of them meaningless, with the letters we had so far learned. The third picture represented a hat, which in Dutch is spelled "hoed" and pronounced "hoot." And "oe" and "d" were added to our store of knowledge. Next came picture number four; I believe it was of a saw, spelled "zaag" and pronounced "zahg" with a long "a" as in "father," and with a guttural "g."

By the end of the first year we not only could read quite a bit, but also add, subtract, and multiply with figures below ten. And we had learned to sing. Our school hours had been from eight to ten and from one to three in the summer, and from half-past eight to ten and from one to three in the winter. On Saturdays and Wednesdays we had the afternoon off.

In the second grade we had our first reader. The books belonged to the school and were returned to the teacher after each lesson. We never had any spelling lessons to learn. We had simple rules of spelling and with these we started in the third grade. But we had to learn an enormous amount of grammar, with which we started in the fourth grade. Dutch grammar is very intricate.

In the second and third grades we learned about the other rows of pictures on the wall. Twice a week we were asked all sorts of questions as to what we saw on a particular picture which was

fastened on to the blackboard, and about the colors; then the teacher explained at length all sorts of things unknown to simple village and farmers' children. Afterwards we had to make a little composition about what we had learned and about what we saw on the picture. These rows of pictures held a great fascination for me. Whenever I was through with my arithmetic or writing lesson, and did not feel like drawing on my slate and was not in a mood to get into mischief, I would look at those pictures on the wall and dream of the big world outside, the world I was so anxious to see, of its cities, but above all, of its forests, its lakes, and the sea!

There was one other addition to our second grade curriculum. That was knitting. Every morning, from 10:30 to 11:30, except on Wednesday and Saturday, we had to knit.

Many an afternoon I had to stay in after school, from a few minutes to a

couple of hours, and had to fill my slate with such sentences as "I must sit still" and "I may not talk." Instead of being humbled by all the punishment I received, it made me all the more audacious and the saucier, for I gloried in proving to the other children that I dared to defy the teacher in spite of what I knew was sure to follow, such as having to stay in, to stand in a corner and of having my ears slapped. Teachers were not allowed to administer any kind of corporal punishment to us, but it was only in extreme cases that parents interfered.

We nicknamed our teacher "pepernoot" because she was so very short. A "pepernoot" is a small spiced cookie the size of a marble.

In every grade we had what we called sneaks. A sneak was a child who was mischievous only when the teacher was not looking; one who talked and laughed and giggled and stuck out his tongue, made his eyes roll, pulled at the corners

of his mouth until these corners almost reached his ears or were on a level with his nostrils; who stuck a pin into other children, pulled at their hair; all this he would do when the teacher's back was turned, but as soon as she glanced in his direction he would look as demure and innocent as a saint, and the wrong child was punished. Such a sneak was loathed by the whole class. We had nothing but contempt for him.

Though I was very saucy and mischievous, I was very fond of my lessons. There never was a time that I did not like to study. I was usually at the head of my class, and it was only when I had earned a larger than usual amount of punishment that I was lowered for a while.

In the higher grades, under the man teacher, our curriculum was quite large, and of all the studies it was the writing of compositions I liked best, and next came geography. I still remember the first map I drew of the United States.

On the walls of the larger schoolroom were the pictures of all the Dutch birds; also pictures of the human skeleton and the vital organs. Of these pictures we were taught in due time. And there were the weights and measures; these were not pictures, they were real. We were taught the metric system although in daily life the old-fashioned el, kop, mudde, mengel, and kan were used. We had a school library of from one hundred to two hundred books.

When we entered the fourth grade, which was in the large schoolroom, we had our lessons in knitting, sewing, crocheting, darning, knitting-darning, and cross-stitching from three to four o'clock on four afternoons and from 10:30 to 11:30 on two mornings. The sewing lessons consisted only in the making of all sorts of seams and stitches.

When I was nine years old some of my girl chums were taking more advanced sewing lessons, right after school,

from four to six, from a seamstress. As all my little friends were there, I asked my mother permission to join the class, and obtained it. We sat in a small room on stools or low chairs. There was no table.

We always pinned our sewing to our knees. This has a decided advantage over sewing over one's finger, as one can keep the work much straighter. When you sew two pieces together over your finger, the one nearer the finger will, in the end, stick out a little over the other one, as with each stitch you skip with the needle an infinitesimal part more of the upper piece than of the lower.

We did not use sewing-machines. Unless the weather was raw, the outside door of the little room was open. If it was very warm, we sat outside. We were allowed to talk as much as we wanted to, sing, laugh, tell stories, and solve riddles. And at times we quarreled. We made and hemmed underclothing, aprons, bed

and table linen and towels only. The making of waists and dresses was supposed to be far too difficult work for children.

And we made innumerable patches. Such a patch was a veritable work of art. It was done very neatly; the corners had to be exactly at ninety degrees and perfect. On both sides of the material the patch looked finished. I have never in this country seen anybody patch the way we did. It took lots of time, but then, our seamstress used to say:

"When it is finished, some one who sees it will ask '*Who* did this?' and not 'How much time was spent on it?'"

These simple people attached little value to time. We never had to hurry, thank goodness.

I attended this sewing class for three summers until I was twelve years old.

The grading of our village school was very inadequate. There were only six grades, and at the age of ten I was in the

highest. So I stayed in that sixth grade for three whole years, repeating over and over again lessons in Dutch history, geography, botany, and grammar. Even most of the readers remained the same. It was only in arithmetic, writing, the reading of music, rudimentary knowledge of civics, and a few other minor branches that I advanced. It was mostly a shameful waste of time. Matters were now somewhat aggravated by my taking private lessons in arithmetic, grammar, reading, geography, and composition four hours a week. The result was that the book of grammar I studied in the evening was far more advanced than the one I had at school.

An insatiable thirst for knowledge now seized me. I wanted to know everything that was to be known. I studied as hard as I could. It was then that I sowed the seeds of all my troubles of the years to come. I studied too persistently, took little interest in play, with the exception

of skating in the winter, of course. The two half-hours of calisthenics and a few duties at home were nearly all the exercise I got, and of fresh air I got less, not even at night, as we slept with closed windows.

One of the best features of the American public school I consider to be the keeping of a staff of school doctors, nurses, and dentists. The next best step towards a better civilization, I believe, would be the compulsory training of all young women in the care of the baby and the older child, such as our hospital nurses receive. How much more happiness this would produce than the ability to draw pictures and to recite a poem correctly!

CHAPTER VI

SOME OF OUR GAMES

One of our most popular games was called "verlos," pronounced "ferlós," with the accent on the last syllable. It was played by all the boys and the girls together. The child who was "it," whom we shall call Jan, chased the others until he managed to touch one of them, whom we shall call Piet. Then he would run to the tree or lantern pole around which the game was played. If Piet reached the pole first, he was free; if Jan reached it first, Piet had to stay near the pole or tree, keeping either his hand or foot against it. Now Jan ran after the other children again.

In the meantime he had to take care that none of them came near Piet, for if Piet was touched by any of them, he was

released, while any child touched by Jan joined Piet, and they all, hand in hand, formed a long row, with the pole or tree at the farther end. It was a very exciting game, for the longer the row grew, the easier it became to reach it and touch it, but at the same time the fewer children there remained free.

Often, when nearly all were caught and the game was almost finished, Jan would at quite a distance from the row, say, just behind the wall of the inn, succeed in touching one of the fleetest runners; at the same time, from a hiding-place in another direction, another child would hie and release the row before Jan had returned to prevent the catastrophe. Then a loud "hoozay" would fill the air. The noise we made on such an occasion would have put the yells of college boys to shame. Many a "verlos" game was never finished.

Rope-jumping was exclusively for girls. We had several different games of rope-

jumping. The most popular one was the game of imitation. The girl who was first would jump a number of times with both feet, then with the left foot and then hop with the right, or she would hop on one side, turn about and hop on the other side; or she would drop a stone, hop a certain number of times and then pick it up. The game could be played in an unending variety. The second, the third, and if there were as many, also the fourth and the fifth girl all had to do exactly as she had done, when their turn came. Whoever tripped or made a mistake, would have to relieve one of the two girls who turned the rope.

Sometimes a girl would jump in, hop, and run out in the diagonal direction; while she ran out the second girl would jump in; while the second one ran out the third would run in; after her the fourth and the fifth and then again the first, who, in the meantime, had walked back and was waiting at the starting-point.

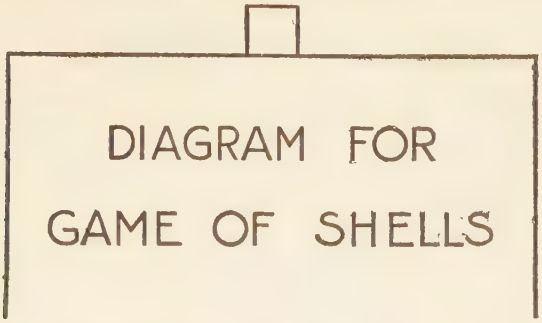
At other times we would jump rope while all of us were running. At again other times two or more girls jumped at the same time. On occasion we also used two ropes, turning them together but in opposite directions. The same thing I have seen in this country. We also had short ropes for individual use.

A favorite game of the boys was rolling hoops. Why this game is so little played in America I cannot understand. In some localities in the Netherlands girls also rolled hoops, but such was not the case in our village.

Both boys and girls played with marbles. Some, as large as a child's fist, were called backets; others, somewhat smaller, bosters; those of ordinary size, knikkers.

Shooting hazelnuts or horse-chestnuts was a favorite game in its season. Each child—there were from three to half a dozen participants—contributed two hazelnuts, or two horse-chestnuts, as the

case might be, and these were placed in a row, the biggest one, called king, at the end on the right-hand side; then came the next in size called queen, and then the princes and princesses, all according to size, the youngest princess at the end. The child whose turn it was would roll



a boster towards the row. If he hit the king, the whole row was his; if the queen, all except the king; if the crown prince, all except the king and queen, etc.; if the little princess at the end, only her.

Shells of walnuts we also played with. We first made the accompanying diagram on the ground. From three to

six children usually played. Each in turn threw a nutshell in the direction of the little square, called the pot, over the center of the horizontal line. The one who threw his shell right into the pot had won the game and all the shells were his. If no one was quite so lucky, the one whose shell lay nearest the pot, but over the horizontal line, picked up and kept as his own all those that had fallen over the line. Then he picked up those below the line, shook them and threw them up into the air. When they had come down again, the shells that lay flat he picked up and kept; the others were picked up and tossed by the child whose shell had been second nearest the pot. He, too, kept those that fell down flat, and the third child tossed the remainder if there were any, and kept those that came down flat. And thus the game was kept up until all the shells had come down flat and been appropriated.

A game we enjoyed playing on winter evenings in the moonlight or near the street-lanterns, before supper time, was called "ambachten," which means "trades." I believe many of you are familiar with a similar game, called "charades." From six to twelve children were necessary to play it, and they were divided into two equal groups. First one group would act a pantomime and the other group would look on and guess its meaning. Then the second group would act a pantomime and the first group would have to do the guessing. The game was capable of an endless variety and was fine exercise for our imaginations.

We also played jacks, but the jacks were of a different shape from what yours are. Most of them were only certain bones out of the bodies of cattle. Yes, we actually played with soup-bones cleaned and polished. Little children using their vivid imaginations, filled whole stables with cows, calves, horses, and pigs, which were

nothing more nor less than bones out of butchered cows.

Baseball was unknown to us. The boys did have a certain kind of ball game, but they seldom played it, as it was more for young men. We girls used the colored rubber balls and threw them against the brick wall of the school. Sometimes one just caught the ball, at other times one clapped one's hands and then caught the ball, or one circled one's arms around and around, or caught the ball with the left hand and then with the right hand, or jumped while catching it, etc. All the while the player and the other children chanted a certain ditty that gave directions as to how the ball had to be caught. If one missed the ball, it was the next child's turn.

We had few parties, no playground, no rings, no slide, no seesaw except sometimes a home-made one, and, part of the time, a home-made swing in our orchard and the cow-barn; we had very few dolls

and these few had to last for years, few dishes, and these were easily lost or broken so that we preferred to play with the broken dishes of our mothers, yet we had a great deal of fun. Having few toys, we made better use of our imaginations than those who have many. Besides, we had a very large variety of extremely interesting and exciting games, that gave us lots of exercise and for which no toys whatever were needed.

At home we often played "Punch and Judy," or, as we called it, "poppenspel," which means dolls' play. We tied a bandana handkerchief around a ball of yarn and called it a doll. We made many of these, and made them dance on the edge of an old, horizontally stretched cow-blanket across a cow-stall; it being in the summer, the stalls were empty and clean. Or we fastened a sheet across the stall, placed a small lamp in the darkened space behind it, and made ducks swim on billowing lakes, men chase boys, teachers

punish children, etc., all cut out of paper and reflected on the sheet. We especially enjoyed having the ducks swim on the waves. We had a ditty, which started somewhat like this: "All pretty ducklings, they swim in the water, falderalderiere, falderalderare."

In the early spring jumping ditches was our favorite pastime. For the small ditches, called "greppels," we did not need any stick or pole. We just ran until we reached the edge and then jumped across it and as far as we could.

At one time, when I was about ten years old, several of us girls were jumping across those greppels, one after the other, and each greppel was wider than the one before. One by one the girls dropped out. At last only two remained, of which I was one and the other a girl called Antje, a year older than I was, and taller. She was the leader. We came to a very wide cross-greppel. She ran, jumped, and landed on the other side.

I looked at the expanse of water and my heart quailed. But I thought whatever she could do, I could. So I mustered up my courage. I ran, reached the edge, and again my heart quailed. My feet stopped. But my body, unable to stop the forward motion so suddenly, fell forward and there I stood, with my legs, that had slipped, up to my knees in the water, and with my arms up to the elbows.

Just then the clock struck one and the other children ran off to school as fast as they could. Only one girl, called Tjerkje, stayed with me. I sat down on the damp grass, pulled off my stockings and socks and wrung them out as well as I could and put them on again. I remember that I had a little hole in the heel of one of my stockings; by the time I had it pulled on again the hole looked as large as a saucer. Then I put on my socks and stuck my feet in my wooden shoes and Tjerkje and I trudged

to school. There, near the door, stood my sister waiting for me. "You must go home and change your stockings and socks," she said; "you will get sick if you don't."

But I did not want to go home and entered the school. Antje had told the schoolmaster that the wind had blown me into the greppel. The master teased me about it, and, strange to say, did not send me home. So there I sat, for three hours, wet to my knees. I did not tell my parents of my accident, nor did my sister. But two days later I had to go to bed with a fever and a sore throat. The old doctor was summoned and he said that I had tonsilitis. I was sick for five weeks, and part of that time had to stay in bed, and all the time in the house.

The boys leaped with poles over the larger ditches, called "slooten" and the small canals called "vaarten" or "grachten," according to purpose or size. Most

of the girls also jumped across slooten, and some even across vaarten and grachten. We enjoyed going to the big canal or "trekvaart," with a pole across our shoulders, leaping over the slooten we met until we stood on the dike of the trekvaart. There grew such pretty flowers right at the edge, and certain reeds that made such queer whistles.

CHAPTER VII

OUR HOLIDAYS

Our spring vacation fell on the last week of April. While we had our week of play, the janitor removed the stoves from the schoolrooms and held a thorough, general school-cleaning, and the village painter came and painted the floors.

Easter and Whitsuntide—the latter falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter—were celebrated for two days; therefore, we had vacation on Easter Monday and on the Monday after Whitsunday, as also on Good Friday and on Ascension Day. On Whitsunday we dressed up in new clothes, and put on new spring hats, as you do on Easter. On Easter it is too cold in Holland for spring clothes. Even on Whitsunday it may hail or snow and be very disagreeable.

We village children had only two weeks of vacation during the summer. Just think of it. Not two months, but two weeks. When I was nine years old, my parents took me in our carriage to Sneek, our nearest town, and there they put me on one of our small canal steamers. Most of the men passengers on the steamer were known to my parents. They were prosperous butter, cheese, or cattle merchants. They promised that they would see to it that I reached my destination in safety. We very slowly steamed along canals, across the Sneeker Lake, and then again along other canals. It was about a three hours' boat-ride, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

The following summer, I again spent my vacation with my grandparents at Oldeboorn, which is the name of the large village where they lived. Then I had a little playmate who was the sole possessor of eight dolls. Eight dolls!

It almost took my breath away. I had only one real doll. This seemed luxury indeed!

When I was twelve, I was to take a somewhat longer trip. A girl of my age came to stay at our house for a week, and after that I went with her to stay at her house for a week. She lived in a very large, pretty village called De Joure. There were nurseries of young trees, something I had never seen before, and pretty lanes with shrubbery on both sides. We enjoyed wandering through them. But the most interesting part of De Joure was the estate of a family belonging to the nobility. Every Sunday the public was permitted to walk through its gardens and park and conservatory, while the head gardener accompanied them.

At one point in the park was a low but steep, small, grass-covered hillock, wholly artificial. It was the first hill or something resembling a hill I

had ever seen. On top of it stood a tower, called an observatory. We climbed up into the little room in the top of this tower, and from the windows had a lovely view over the surrounding country. In a large register we wrote our names. Then we descended. The boys of the crowd tried to run down the steep hillside; it was something novel to them, and while doing so, unable to remain on their feet, they fell and started to roll; they rolled over and over again to the delight of the crowd, until they struck the path at the foot of the hillock.

There was a sort of bower across one of the paths. When we walked through it, by a secret device the gardener made the water most unexpectedly come down like a shower all over us. We spent a whole afternoon on the grounds and certainly had the time of our lives.

Our Christmas vacation lasted about ten days. Christmas was celebrated very quietly and for two days. The first day

we went to church with our parents. I sat deep down in a big pew with my mother, and she gave me her cushion to sit on.

Under her feet mother had one of the "stoven" or foot-warmers. Every other Sunday—our parish consisting of two villages, in each one of which a service was held every other Sunday—during the cold season, a woman of the village placed a glowing hard turf in mother's stoof just before nine o'clock, when the service started. Many of the women who lived in the village, themselves carried a stoof by a brass handle as they entered the church. It was never cold, though, for there was a red-hot stove, and the church was not large, though high. My mother carried a "kerkboek" or hymnal to church; it had two pretty, wrought silver clasps. We carried smaller ones without clasps.

Our church dated from before the time of the Norsemen, who, with their Vi-

kings, came from Norway in the eleventh century and harassed the peoples who lived south of them. Traces of these Norsemen are still evident. At the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, the congregation became Protestant; they severed their connections with the Catholic church, but kept the house of worship and its property. They demolished all interior decorations and statues and ever since the walls have been white, bare, and ugly.

At noon, on Christmas, we ate for dessert a lot of bread-pudding, and in the evening, also with our tea and coffee, big, long loaves of sweet bread so full of currants that you could not see anything but currants.

If the ice was strong, everybody went skating except those who were very pious; they considered it sinful to enjoy themselves on Christmas.

On New Year's Eve we again went to church. To the large congregation, the

preacher, called "domine" in Dutch, would review the year's events and remember those of the village people who had died during the past twelve months. By nine o'clock we were home and soon after went to bed.

On New Year's Day we arose early. It was great fun for us to hide behind a door and to await the coming of mother and older sisters, and sometimes of neighbors and friends whom we had seen approaching, and surprise them by crying the Frisian equivalent for Happy New Year. The fun came in trying to "beat the others to it." However, one had to be out of bed, though it was not necessary to be all dressed. A little later, there was more excitement. The poorest of the village children would come, in twos, in threes or in fours, knock at the door, open it as far as the brass chain would allow, and cry with loud voice: "Much happiness and many blessings in the New Year." That sounds like a big

mouthful, but expressed in Frisian it was rather short. One of us children would sit near the door, with a cup full of pennies, and to each child we gave a couple of them. These poor urchins would go to all the farmers and well-to-do villagers, all before noon, and for the pennies thus gathered, their mothers would buy them a warm cap, a pair of mittens, klompen, or wool mufflers.

At about twelve, we had still greater fun. The postman, overworked man as he was that day, but also much-treated man (many people insisted upon his drinking a glass of gin when delivering the mail that day) brought us a stack of post-cards, some for father and mother, and some for each of us. All our friends, though some lived next door, remembered us with pretty cards, and it was fun to read the little verses underneath the pictures.

And in the afternoon, if the ice was strong, we went skating.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. MARTIN AND ST. NICHOLAS

As you have your St. Valentine and your Hallowe'en, so we had St. Martin and St. Nicholas.

St. Martin was celebrated on November eleventh, but only in such villages and towns as had preserved ancient customs. On the evening of the eleventh, soon after we had come out of school and it was dark, we gathered a lot of dry twigs and shavings, and if possible, we procured a tarred barrel. We toted these things to a meadow right back of the village. There we built a fire and we danced and shouted around it as if we had been wild Indians. Father used to tell us of a boy who ran right through the flames of a St. Martin's fire, scorching his hair and clothes. I deplored the

degenerate days I had been born in, for there was not a single boy among us children who had the courage to follow this hero's example.

When the fire was out, we walked two or three abreast, holding Chinese lanterns or a candle stuck in a turnip with a paper bag around it, somewhat resembling your pumpkins on Hallowe'en. Some of the boys had firecrackers. We sang many school songs and also a ditty about St. Martin being very cold and needing fire-wood, while we were serenading some of the village people and the nearest farmers, who rewarded us with a few cents. Later we went to the baker and bought cookies and sweets for the money and divided this amongst ourselves. Thus the fun ended.

The day of days, to us, was the sixth of December, St. Nicholas Day. St. Nicholas was once a bishop in Spain and beloved by all for his good deeds. That was many hundreds of years ago, but since

then he is supposed to come from Spain with his black servant each December.

He is said to ride on a white horse through the air, and on the eve of the sixth, his feast day, to jump from roof to roof, where he descends through the chimney into the house. There he finds, standing in a row, the children's baskets with a tuft of hay for his horse in each of them, and he fills them with sweets and toys if the little ones have been good, with a turf and salt if they have been bad or are becoming too big to be thus remembered by him. Then he hides the baskets somewhere in the room. Noiselessly, he now climbs up through the chimney, mounts his waiting charger and visits another house.

Several mornings before the great event we would find a sort of ginger-cake called "taai-taai," in the form of a woman at the churn, Adam and Eve under the apple-tree, of a boy or a girl, or some animal, in our stockings as we awoke. In

the evening, especially on the eve of the sixth, St. Nicholas himself, dressed in a long tabard with mitre on his head, followed by his black servant who carried a bag, would enter the living-room. Sometimes the good saint was dressed up so unsaintlike, resembling more a tramp-burglar than a bishop, that we little ones were frightened and hid behind mother's chair, although we quite well knew there was no such thing as a "Sinterklaas," as we called him in Frisian. He would ask whether we had been good or bad; if bad, his servant would take us along in the bag and carry us to the attic where he was supposed to keep a mill, and in this mill he would grind us to pepernoten or peppernuts, the tiny gingerbread cookies. Of course, mother always said we had been good children, and then he would open the bag and throw handfuls of pepernoten on the floor. We forgot our fear, and coming out of our hiding-places, we picked up

the cookies, finding them in every corner of the room.

Early in the morning of the sixth we awoke, and in our nightclothes and on bare feet we would run into the very cold front-room and hunt for the baskets. They were hidden in some corner, behind a piece of furniture or in a closet. As soon as we had found them we carried them into the warm living-room and there we examined the contents, consisting of one toy or a book for each of us, and several figures, some large, others small, of taai-taai, the brown, flat, tough cake, of which we were so fond, and which was made by the bakers all through the country on this feast of St. Nicholas only. There was always a girl, a couple of feet tall, for a boy, and a boy for a girl, and these we hung against the wall and kept for weeks sometimes. The others lasted only a few days.

Then there were figures and letters made of a sweeter kind of cake, more peperno-

ten, cookies, letters of sweet chocolate, and hearts of a very sweet pink or white candy, and the initial of our given name made of a deliciously light pastry, the filling of which was made of almonds and other ingredients. We called it "marsepyn." It was very rich and by every one considered a great delicacy. We also received a flat cake, resembling a pancake; it was sweet and decorated with gold tinsels.

We went to school early that morning to tell other children of the treasures we had received and to make comparisons. Now, for years we had known the truth about St. Nicholas; I had discovered it at the age of six, but the little comedy was kept up each year, just as a child may talk to a doll while knowing very well that it is not alive and cannot hear. And our fear of St. Nicholas when he was dressed so disreputably and growled so fiercely, was genuine, although we did not believe in him.

In school, the younger children sang a song in his honor and the teacher also gave them each a figure of taai-taai.

On the eve of St. Nicholas, many grown-ups and also some of the older children went to the baker to listen to the results of the raffle which he had been conducting. Our family usually won at least one prize, and sometimes two. These were several letters of marsepyn, taai-taai, big cakes, gigantic loaves of bread with currants, or other sweets. Small shopkeepers held raffles of toys, dry-goods and other things.

The baker that evening also conducted a sort of gambling hall in his bakery. Young and old were throwing dice to win more taai-taai and more sweets. These people never gambled at any other time, many never even played cards, yet at such a time some of them would not stop until all their available cash was gone and they had nothing to show for their folly but heaps of cakes and tarts and other

sweet stuff. It was a very good day for the bakers. A few years ago, a law was passed, prohibiting this raffling and dice-throwing.

We children did some impersonating St. Nicholas on our own account, too. A couple of evenings before St. Nicholas Eve we dressed up in old clothes that belonged to our mothers and older sisters, and tied before our faces masks of paper which we had cut out and colored ourselves. We put on long gloves, and, supplied with a big bag of pepernoten, went to a few of the poorest homes where there were several little tots, and, opening the front door carefully, threw handfuls of the confectionery on the floor. We must have been a queer lot of Sinterklaases, and I am sure that the fun it gave us must have far exceeded in magnitude the good and pleasure the poor children derived from the few pepernoten.

CHAPTER IX

FARM LIFE

The Dutch call their country Nederland, which, translated, is Netherland. Formerly it was "de Nederlanden," or The Netherlands. It is divided into eleven provinces, and the two most important ones are South and North Holland. Hence the popular name Holland. Friesland is one of the most northerly as well as one of the most prosperous provinces.

The Frisian fields are perfectly level. They are separated from each other by slooten and divided into rectangular pieces by greppels. About two thousand years ago the Frisians, who had just migrated from somewhere in Germany, settled in our province. They were barba-

rians, in fact, little more than savages. The country was very marshy, and where now is the Zuider Zee, was then only Lake Flevo.

For ages, when it was stormy, the sea had overflown the low land. Each time it had left behind a layer of decayed rock that originally had come from other countries, scraped from mountains by glaciers and driven into the sea by icebergs. These innumerable layers of decayed rock formed the rich, heavy clay that gives Netherland its glorious meadows and makes possible its raising of splendid cattle. The meadows are beautifully green, full of rich clover and dotted with buttercups, daisies and other wild-flowers.

The barbarians, however, did not know about raising cattle and growing grain. They were lured hither by the abundance of fish, fowl, wild boars and wild cows, and they wanted to stay there. They did not like to be driven away by

the waves that came rolling in from the sea. So they piled the earth into mounts, they made hillocks, and they called them "terpen." These terpen still exist. They are no longer hillocks, but perfectly flat meadows a few feet higher than the other meadows. On these terpen the barbarians built their huts, and they lived unmolested by the sea.

Gradually they became civilized. They learned to protect the land from the sea by dikes. The Romans taught them to build canals and drain the fields. The terpen are of the richest clay and in these modern times are gradually being leveled. The soil is sold at a big price and shipped to other parts of the country where it fertilizes a poor soil. While digging in the earth, the workmen often find queer objects, which are placed in the museum at Leeuwarden.

The great majority of the farms in Friesland are owned by rich people, many of whom belong to the nobility. The farm-

ers pay an enormously high rent, from nine hundred to fifteen hundred dollars a year for seventy or eighty acres and farmhouse. Besides this, they have to pay wages to a lot of farm help, and yet, if their rent is not too high, they manage to make a good living, bring up a large family and save a little fortune for their old age. This is due to the fertility of the soil, the excellent care they give same by frequent fertilization, the strictest economy, and wise management. However, they have to work very hard, their worry is great, their pleasures are few and simple, and some are forced to give up their favorite occupation, sell out and go to America.

Meanwhile, the owners, who do not soil their hands, who do not weary their brains, enjoy themselves. And the farmers, in spite of their native pride and independence, for fear of losing the farms and because of the demand for farms always far overtopping the supply, look

up to these owners and treat them as demigods. I, who had always a strong sense of justice, never could understand why the farmers were so foolish and so irrational.

My parents usually had about thirty milch cows, nearly all black and white. These Frisian-Holstein cows give much more milk than the Jerseys; their milk is not so rich in butter-fat but contains more of the stuff out of which cheese is made.

From October to May our cows stood in the barns, two in a stall. The stalls were about a foot higher than the brick-paved floor. In each stall was a small window with four tiny panes and if the cows cared to they might look out. Their tails were fastened with a rope to the beams, but not so that it prevented their chasing the flies off their backs. The idea was the prevention of the cattle hanging their tails in the gutter.

Twice a week our hired man used thor-

oughly to wash the cows' tails in a large, red-painted bucket of water, and after that he straightened out their hairs, one by one. We often helped him with the latter. The tails of some cows are curly, and I assure you, these looked very pretty after having been washed and disentangled. The hired man also curried the cows, as one does horses, so they always looked clean and sleek.

Besides hay, we often fed the cows a certain cake cooked of cracked beans and ground linseed, in the winter. The pigs ate cooked cracked maize.

In May, as soon as the cows had been led into the meadows, a man scrubbed the cow-barns thoroughly clean, from top to bottom; then the womenfolks did the whitewashing and the fixing up; before the tiny windows they hung lace curtains, also for the larger ones at the end of the barn, and the painter came and did his share with red and black paint, to the walls and the stalls, and he painted the

large, heavy wooden buckets and other wooden things.

Every morning at four o'clock and every evening at four, the cows were driven into the corral close to the house, and there milked. Some one asked me once: "Why did you not leave them overnight in the corral; then you would not have to gather them so early in the morning; it would save work and time." But the Frisian farmer never thinks of saving time if it means less money. Cows like to graze late in the evening, during the night or early in the morning, and the more they graze the more milk they give. Besides, they are more comfortable in the meadow than in the corral. During the fall, they were covered with a blanket to protect them from the cold and rain. This blanket somewhat resembled grey burlap; however, it was heavier and much more tightly woven.

In the spring and the summer three or

four big churns half-filled with cream were churned by a horse attached to a mill. The butter was worked by my mother. The skimmed milk with a little of the cream left in was made into Edam cheese by my father, and we children helped. We also assisted with the coloring of the round little cheeses with aniline dye or their polishing with linseed oil.

We did not use a separator for the skimming of the milk. The milk was simply poured into large, flat, round-bottomed copper pans, and these pans stood in rows in the milk cellar against the walls on brick elevations a foot higher than the spacious stone floor. While stooping over, my mother skimmed the milk with a flat, circular brass pan, and emptied the cream into a very large, copper pail with brass handle and brass rim, and from this into blue-painted barrels. As all empty brass and copper things were scoured each day, you can

imagine what an enormous amount of work this meant.

In the summer all the milking was done in these big copper pails with the brass rim and brass handle, and that were as wide at the bottom as at the top. The average farmer's daughter or milkmaid carried these pails full of milk, either by hand or dangling from a yoke over her shoulders, as easily as if they were the ordinary tin buckets one finds in this country. I, however, was never able even to lift them when filled.

The buttermilk was fed to the calves and the pigs. The whey, left over from the cheese-making, was also fed to the calves and the pigs. We never wasted anything, not so much as a crust of bread, a tuft of hay, or a cup of buttermilk unless it was by accident.

In the fall and the winter we did not make cheese. Then all the milk was churned, as there was much less of it.

In the early spring I often had to help

with the feeding of the young calves, that immediately after their birth were taken away from their mothers. I hated the work even more than I disliked washing dishes.

We usually had a dozen sheep. When, in the late spring, they had been sheared and their lambs taken away from them, they were daily milked twice. We children had to do the milking. The milk of sheep is very rich, much richer than cow's milk, and therefore not to be recommended for drinking purposes. In coffee and tea it is excellent and takes the place of cream. We also fed it, mixed with buttermilk, to the calves, and once in a while one of my sisters made little cheeses of it for home use.

Our sheep were entirely white and their fleeces were nice and clean. Sometimes we had one or two black sheep. Once, when I was milking the sheep all alone, the ram came. He was a big, strong, beautiful creature and father prized him

highly. But he did not like petticoats. When my brother was with me, he was rather respectful. Now seeing me alone, he came running at me. I stood still, waiting for him. It was too late for running away.

I knew he was many times stronger than I was, but my safety lay in taking hold of his horns, so that he could not maul me. I waited, with both hands stretched out. When he had approached me, I gripped the horns. Then I yelled. I yelled for help at the top of my lungs.

No one in or near the house seemed to hear me. In the meantime the ram pushed me backwards towards the canal. I yelled still louder. Just when I stood at the edge of the water, desperately holding on to the ram's horns, a man came running across the foot-bridge. With his heavy cane he chased the ram away. He was a cattle merchant, and while passing on the highway, had seen

me and heard my cries. He saved me just in time.

In the spring we had to drive the young lambs into the schuur in the evening and back into the meadows in the morning, and often in the daytime we had to lead them away from the slooten to prevent their getting drowned.

Farm help, that is to say the young men and the young women who work on the farm for their board and wages, are hired by the year. They may be hired some time during the winter, but they do not leave their old employers before the thirteenth of May, when they go to their new employers.

Fortunately, they have never heard that the number thirteen is unlucky, or they surely would not change their positions on the thirteenth. The Frisians are singularly free from superstition. However, the number eleven was our hoodoo. Not that it meant bad luck, but we associated it with craziness. The

one who in a raffle drew the number eleven was laughed at and called crazy. If you were eleven years old, you were teased with being queer. And so in every case where the number eleven appeared. It was not really a superstition, but a joke.

Then there were the day-laborers, married men who went home at night and sometimes for their meals also. They helped with the milking, feeding, hay harvest, fertilizing, ditch-dredging, etc.

For many years, during the hay harvest we had two Germans from Oldenburg do the mowing, and two from Prussia help with the gathering. But finally the Germans remained in their own country, where they could find enough work, and we hired men from the neighboring province of Groningen, or some from another part of Friesland, where the soil was unproductive and the people were poor. The latter were very

independent and not nearly so good-natured as the foreigners. Also, many of them, as soon as they had earned a little money, spent it, on the first Sunday, for gin and got drunk, and for the next few days they would not be able to work. This made them unreliable and a nuisance as well. However, there were good men among them, too.

The hay harvest to us children was one long, lively, happy festival. It lasted about four or five weeks, according to the weather. Our greatest pleasure was to ride on those empty wagons to the meadows and on the full ones back home. These wagons, like almost everything else in Netherland, were painted in bright colors; they were loosely put together, had no springs, and when they were empty, and driven over the hard, dry soil or the brick road, they so shook that we children, sitting on them, with our legs dangling from behind, had to hold on to the sides, and it felt as if our lungs,

stomach, heart, and liver were playing tag in our bodies.

On the return trip it was different. Unless an older person was with us, we were not allowed to sit on top of the hay. The driver always sat on a low seat and could not possibly watch us, or even see us. Then the horses always walked slowly.

Every afternoon after school, and on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, we helped with the hay harvest. We had small rakes, specially made for us, and we raked in the front rows, which were the easiest. It really did not mean work to us; it was just fun. Often we would play in the haystacks, roll down their sides, and at times we were nearly buried under the hay. Village children would come and join us.

We loved to pick the flowers that grew in the ditches and on the water's edge, such as blue-eyed forget-me-nots, and the fragrant wild mint. Sometimes we

hunted caterpillars and lady-bugs. These we put in match-boxes and gave them leaves to eat, but they often escaped. The lady-bugs were our favorites. My brother would sometimes chase us with frogs. We were not afraid of them, but the contact of their cold, slimy bodies is not pleasant. Sometimes we picked up all the feathers we could find. Those of the lapwing were most numerous ; they were half black and half white. We made quite a collection. We ran many races, in our stocking-feet or with slippers on.

I enjoyed lying on my back and gazing through my straw hat at the blue sky and the white clouds. Netherland is known all over the world for its beautiful cloud effects, and this is one of the reasons that artists of other countries like to come there and paint. Out of the light fleecy clouds, the heavy ones like mountains of snow, those of a grey color and the gloomy, dark harbingers of a thunder-storm, I created castles and

knights of old, the lofty Alps and the low sand-dunes, ruins of ancient cities, lakes, islands and even the outlines of whole continents.

Our sunsets were glorious, and so were the sunrises. We were often up early enough to see them. Our twilights were long and the men, during the hay harvest, worked as long as they could see, which meant till ten o'clock, many a time. After that they had supper.

By four in the morning they were up again and dressed, ready to go to work, before breakfast. But they did not work nearly so fast, and constantly as men work here. And they did a lot of talking and laughing. At seven they had their first meal, consisting of tea, rye bread, and butter and cheese. No meat, no potatoes. Yet the men were strong and healthy. We, the children, had to go to bed early until we were about twelve years old. After that, we, too, were allowed to stay

up as late as ten. I have often stood aghast at the American habit of allowing little boys and girls to stay up late at night and go out with their elders.

For breakfast we children had rye bread with cheese or bacon, often also white bread and buns, and milk if we wanted it. The bacon was clearer and whiter than any bacon I have seen here; it was smoked slowly in our enormous, old-fashioned chimneys, for months and months. We did not fry it. We just ate it as it was, for there was no danger of getting the deadly parasite, trichina, so often found in American pork. We cut it into very small cubes, placed these on the buttered, coarse rye bread (which is very different from the American rye bread) and we ate with great relish.

At ten o'clock the folks had coffee and koek, at noon we had dinner. Though our meals were very simple at any time, during the hay harvest this was the case more so than ever. Then we dispensed

with potatoes, except on Sundays. We ate green or dark grey peas, beans, pearl barley, with pork or bacon or veal and buttermilk porridge.

At three in the afternoon one of my older sisters brought a big, brass kettle—which shone like a mirror—full of tea to the fields, and a basket with rye bread and butter and cheese. Lying down, in the shade of a stack, the men had their tea, without sugar and milk. Father, usually, came at about two o'clock, to join the men, and had tea with them, and so had we if it was Wednesday or Saturday.

At four, those who did the milking went home, and the others stayed. At six, they drank coffee and ate koek once more, and after the day's work was over, all had supper at the house. Supper consisted of a dish made of milk, flour, and something resembling cracked wheat, only finer, and this was seasoned with a sort of sweet sauce. We children were very fond of it. But it was the tea at

three and the coffee at six, out in the open, that we enjoyed most of all.

The Dutch summers are short and the thermometer seldom rises to eighty degrees Fahrenheit. However, at seventy-five it is quite hot, because of the humidity of the air. There is a great deal of sultry weather. The Frisian evenings are always chilly.

Every evening we were put to sleep by the croaking of the frogs. There were two kinds, the green ones, which were the larger kind, and the yellow ones. We used to throw pieces of brick at them as they stuck their heads above the water. It seems to me that they were bigger than the American frogs, and they had a far more agreeable way of croaking; it was not so monotonous, there being a sort of tune to it.

Do you remember the words of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner: "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink"? One could almost say the same of Neth-

erland. Drinking-water there is poor. Where we lived, good wells were scarce. The water from most of them could be used for cattle only, and for washing and scrubbing, because of the composition of the soil. If we dug the wells very deep, down through the layer of clay, we were almost sure to find water that was brackish.

We therefore used rain-water for cooking and drinking purposes. We kept it in a cistern, into which it fell through a pipe from the roof and gutters. The tiles of the roof were cleaned once a year, but that did not prevent a lot of dirt from entering the cistern with the water. No one, or at least extremely few people, used filters. We had our cistern cleaned as often as it was empty, and as it was small, it was empty quite frequently in the summer. In fact, often we had to buy buckets full of water from the neighbors, who, having larger cisterns, or two of them, were more fortu-

nate. It was nothing unusual to find dead bugs and living bugs and other creeping things, especially salamanders, in the copper bucket as we pulled it up out of the cistern. We never boiled the water before drinking it, yet none of us ever had typhoid, bubonic plague, nor any of the other dreaded germ diseases.

CHAPTER X

THE STORKS

The stork is a much-beloved bird in Netherland. It builds its nest by preference on the brick chimneys of farmhouses. There are seldom more than one couple of storks in one small village, and the story runs that when a member of a family who have storks dies, the storks leave and will not return. Of course, this is an old superstition. Nevertheless, it is true that when an old farmer who lived near our village had died during the winter, the storks that had been making their nest on his chimney for many a spring did not return to his bereaved family. They selected another house as their domicile and that house was ours.

Storks seem to like old houses. They

alighted on our parlor chimney and started to build their nest. We were all very happy to have them. However, my parents, though they welcomed the birds, objected to their building on the brick chimney. We not only often heated the room in the summer, but the dust and dirt that might drop out of the nest would soil the parlor.

So my father had the upper branches of the trunk of a high tree cut off, a wagon-wheel laid flat on this tree trunk, and a bundle of dry twigs placed on the wheel. At the same time, the nest the storks were building on the chimney was destroyed. And the wise birds took the hint, and built on the tree.

Still, one cannot always coerce them. They have a will of their own. Our mayor, who lived on a fine old estate in a neighboring village, was very anxious to have storks. So he had a high pole built in front of his house, on top of that pole placed a wagon-wheel,

and on the wheel a bunch of twigs. Each spring the storks, old ones and young ones, came and flew around the pole; they hovered about it, flew back and forth, but never did a couple select the place for their home.

It is a very funny sight, the feeding of the baby storks by their parents, and their learning to fly. Mother stork and father stork wade through the ditches, and when they see a frog, snap! they snatch it with their long beaks and swallow it. Then they fly back to the nest where the three or four babies, with outstretched necks, screech as loud as they can, their beaks wide open. The parents throw up the frogs they have been safe-keeping in their crop, and let them slide from out their own beaks into the beaks of the young birds.

Each spring there arrived from sunny Egypt our female stork alone, to await the coming of her mate two weeks later. But what happened one spring? Only

two days after her arrival the husband came. We were surprised at his early appearance. We noticed that he was smaller than the female, while her mate of the years before had been of the same size. We concluded that the old one must have died during the winter and that she had chosen another. At any rate, they appeared perfectly happy and started to rebuild their nest.

Then, at the usual time, two weeks after the coming of the female, there arrived the male of the previous summer. He did not scold his faithless wife, nor did he beat her or desert her. No, but he did fight the usurper. For days they fought, and they fought bitterly. The old one would hover for hours around the nest, waiting for the little one to leave it, and when the latter, who screamed madly, did leave it and advance, there was a battle royal. The female remained neutral.

At last, after many days, the rightful

owner of the nest conquered. He did not kill his enemy, but he beat him so severely that he left, never to return. And the female welcomed the hero and they lived happily ever afterward.

CHAPTER XI

THE WALKS WE TOOK

During the summer some of us girls often took a walk to neighboring villages. We had a clean, brick-laid and shaded highway to walk on, or good, graveled roads, and sometimes we followed a foot-path or a wagon-road through the meadows and crossed foot-bridges.

The wagon-road had once been a sea dike, many centuries ago, but gradually the water had receded and the land been reclaimed. Now the dike was a road and almost entirely overgrown with grass and wild flowers. Quite a number of villages were within easy walking distance, from two to ten miles away. I never missed one of these walks.

Once, three other girls and I walked to a little village called Wieward, where, in a

tomb in the church, we viewed the bodies of several men and women who had died three or four hundred years ago. These bodies had never been embalmed; nevertheless, like the Egyptian mummies, they had not decayed. There was, however, in appearance a vast difference between them and the mummies. They were not dried up; they had kept their rounded, full shape; but the skin had taken on the color of parchment. The clothes had decayed and dwindled away to something that looked like thin potato peelings. The hair had disappeared.

Why these bodies had never decayed, nobody seemed quite able to explain satisfactorily. Undoubtedly the chemical composition of the soil underneath, as it was absorbed in the water standing in the tomb, had something to do with it. For it contained about a foot of water, and one had to walk on boards.

Once some people decided to drain it, and so they did. Then signs of decay

were noticed, and immediately they refilled the tomb with the same amount of water as there had been previously. Also, in late years, for experimental purposes, a dead cat and a rooster were placed in the tomb, and like the human bodies, they, too, remained preserved. Of course, we children—about nine or ten years old—looked on in awe and wonder.

Not all our hikes ended happily and merrily. In some places we were not wanted. There was one village, also about three miles away, where the girls gave us a very cold reception. As soon as they saw us they started to follow us; we entered a candy store and after we came out, there was quite a crowd waiting. They called us names, made fun of us, threw pieces of brick at us, and they were all ready for fist fights. But we did not want fist fights. And it was useless to talk of peace to them. So we ran. We ran as fast as we could, through streets and alleys and up the road, until we could run no

more. But they still followed us. They kept on following us.

And why all this animosity? You could never guess. It was about the ancient feminine weakness: clothes. At that time it was the fashion for women to wear bustles. The daughter of our baker, who was thirteen, and I, aged twelve (there were about six of us that Sunday) being almost young girls, wore bustles. And it seems that the daughters of this simpler village believed us to be too fashionably and too well-dressed. It was the old story over and over again: "Thou shalt not dress better than I do." And so they made us suffer. They followed us and jeered us until we had almost reached home.

It seems unbelievable that at the time I was a girl, and perhaps this is the case even now, one found many benighted people, not only in out-of-the-way hamlets, but also in the big cities, who openly made fun of and jeered others whose man-

ners and dress appeared different from theirs or who showed themselves to be strangers.

There was another village, in another direction, and also about three miles away, which village was noted for its variety of religious denominations. In the United States, for a town of five hundred souls to have four churches of different creeds is no uncommon thing, but in our province it most certainly was.

The people were always bickering about religious matters, and "peace on earth, good will to men" was a meaningless phrase among them. And their fighting proclivities had descended to their children. There were no rougher, meaner boys and girls anywhere around for miles and miles.

To this village belonged a hamlet and that hamlet I daily had to pass, in later years, on my way to and from school at Sneek, but it was always with fear and trepidation in my heart, es-

pecially in the winter when there was snow on the ground. I dreaded the hard snowballs, often containing small pieces of brick. There were only a few children in this hamlet, but these few were fine specimens of those of the main village.

A feature of our roads was the dog-cart. It was not really a cart, but a wagon, drawn by a dog, or perhaps by two, or four dogs, while the man usually sat on the side of the wagon, with his feet dangling down. This man was the village errand boy. Each village had at least one of these errand "boys." Some went to town every week day, others once or twice a week. They were express men as well. For each errand they did, and for each package they carried, they charged from three to ten cents, according to size. Some of these men were good to their dogs, others treated them cruelly and you could hear the beasts cry and yelp a mile away. Frisian people, though charitable, are no sentimentalists,

and it was only in extreme cases that these men were arrested and condemned to serve a term in prison.

On our walks, I always took a memorandum book and a pencil along and wrote down everything we saw, even to such details as a water-rat which jumped into a ditch when he heard us.

It had become my ambition to see all the world, everything there was to be seen, and I therefore thought the best thing I could do was to start with the surrounding villages and gradually follow this up with all the rest of the towns and villages of our province. There were hundreds of them. Did we not do the same thing in school with our geography lessons? We started with the schoolhouse, next came the village, then the municipality, this was followed by our province, later came the whole country of Netherland, next Europe, and then, one by one, the other continents.

One day, however, when thinking and

thinking, I became appalled by the vast number of villages, towns, and cities there must be in the world. Could I ever see them all, even if I had lots of money and did not have to spend any time in making a living? It did seem rather hopeless. I feared it would take many lives instead of one short life of perhaps sixty or seventy years.

While moodily pondering over this to me very serious problem, suddenly a light shone in upon me. Would all these places be worth seeing? Were not many of the villages I had seen so much alike that I might have missed seeing some of them and yet have missed little? I heaved a sigh of relief.

CHAPTER XII

THE KERMIS

Our kermis or annual fair fell in the second week of October. It lasted three days, and this meant three days of vacation for us. It was, however, a badly appointed time. It was always cold, and usually stormy. The weather spoiled much of the fun. Several days before the kermis we lived in a continual excitement.

Nearly all the kermis people, that is the people who owned the merry-go-rounds and the booths and stalls, lived in ships and they went from kermis to kermis, the whole long summer and fall. During the winter and spring they lived in town.

From morning till night we watched the "opvaart" or canal. When, far in

the distance, we discovered a sail, we seriously discussed the problem whether it might be a booth-ship or not. When we had decided that it must be a booth-ship or perhaps the merry-go-round-ship, and it was not too close to school-time, off we went, to meet it. To nearly every one of these ships we gave a hearty welcome and an escort to the village.

On the day before the kermis, early in the morning, at recess and at noon, we helped to erect the structures, that is to say, we carried the boards and other parts from the ship. The following afternoon the fun started.

We rode on the gaily decorated merry-go-rounds. Never in this country have I seen them so gay with colors, draperies, and fringes.

At times we walked along the booths in which were sold toys, "oliekoeken," which resemble doughnuts somewhat except that they have no holes in them, and "poffertjes," which are flat and much

MERRY-GO-ROUND AT KERMIS IN THE VILLAGE OF DEERSUM.

Some of the men are dressed in women's clothes.

SKATING-RACE OF COUPLES AT VILLAGE OF DEERSUM.

It is thawing, and there are few present.

more delicate. The oliekoeken are round. There were also waffles, sweets and kermiskoeken. A kermiskoek was a flat, oblong, cookie-like cake, and it had written on it with white frosting: *Ter kermis, voor vader; voor moeder; voor Jan; voor Anna; voor Piet; voor Marie;* or some other name. "Voor" means for.

Then there were the organ grinders and street singers. The latter were children, and their nasal voices were a sore trial to sensitive ears. When I was quite little, a man with a Punch and Judy show used to come, too. In some stalls, over a hollowed place in a large block of wood, was placed a very long and thin piece of cake, about a foot wide, and whoever could break this cake in two with a cleaver won the cake.

The most important events of the kermis, for the grown-ups at least, were the races. On the first day, there usually was a race of horses before the two-wheeled carriages called tilburies. The

race was held on the highway by farmers and no gambling ever took place. No one even thought of it.

On the second day young farmers and their wives or sweethearts or sisters competed in "ringryden." The couple, driving in a tilbury, would try to obtain as many rings as possible while passing, in a row, a pole in which rings had been placed.

On the third day young men either held a foot-race or a bicycle race. Sometimes prizes were offered to the owners of the most prettily decorated bicycles.

At other times young fellows would dress in women's clothes, and with a couple of baskets—such as are carried by women who sell bread, rolls, and cake for the bakers—dangling from a yoke on their shoulders, would hold foot-races, which were very funny and amusing.

Sometimes men, and occasionally young women, would race, each pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with empty kegs. If

a keg rolled off, the racer would first have to stop, pick up the keg and place it back on the wheelbarrow before he was allowed to go on. Often, just before he had put one back in place, another would start to roll, or they would all roll off at the same time. It was against the rules to have them stand on end.

And then there were still other games. Some years we children were remembered too, and had our games. When it came to running, I was faster than any of the other girls of my class, owing to my long legs, undoubtedly. Usually, the grown-ups were so busy with their own pleasures that we were forgotten.

CHAPTER XIII

LEEUWARDEN AND SNEEK

Leeuwarden is the capital of Friesland. It contains from 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. It is a pretty and very neat little city.

During the kermis, we used to go there with father and mother on Friday, market day. It was a two-hours' ride. Father always let his horses trot leisurely. At present, my parents, having retired from farming, are living there in one of its quiet, peaceful streets.

Leeuwarden used to be a walled city. Most of the wall has been levelled and changed into pretty lanes. Near a certain spot of the old wall at Leeuwarden, overlooking the moat, still stands a massive leaning tower, dated from before the twelfth or thirteenth century, when the

waves of the sea washed as far as the town, although at present it is several miles inland. This tower, then, did service as a lighthouse.

Once we entered the old tower and climbed up its many stone stairs, grown slippery and worn by the use of ages. On our way to the top we passed the old bell. This bell is very large and heavy and when it rings the deep tones shake the whole structure. In fact, its ringing had become dangerous, and its melodious voice was heard only on unusual occasions, far and wide over the town and the surrounding country.

When we had reached the flat top of the erstwhile lighthouse, father, mother, one of my sisters, and my younger brother and I had a beautiful view over the whole town, and many villages, farmhouses, meadows dotted with cattle, shaded roads, and trains that seemed like slow, creeping animals. In a country where there are no hills and no "sky-scrapers," the

opportunity of getting such a view is very much appreciated.

Sneek was our nearest town. It contained 11,000 or 12,000 inhabitants, and had also been a walled city. Little of its old wall was left. We often visited Sneek and bought things in its stores. Like all Dutch towns, it has a large market-place, which stands near the "gymnasium" or secondary school, and near the Groote Kerk or Big Church.

On Tuesdays I often saw hundreds of fine, black and white cows standing there in rows. Cattle merchants in long blue blouses walked among and behind them, and also farmers in wooden shoes and with caps on. They all did a lot of loud talking, and every once in a while one could hear a merchant and a farmer talk as if angry, and the one slap hard on the palm of the other's outstretched hand. Were they trying to hurt each other? No, they were only driving a hard bargain. When the cow had

FLOWER-MARKET AT SNEEK.

MARKET-DAY AT LEEUWARDEN.

In the centre is the old weigh-house

changed ownership, one could see the two men, as the very best of friends, enter an inn. There the farmer would receive the price in hard cash. On many occasions one farmer sold to another instead of to a merchant.

Besides cattle, there were pens with pigs, hogs, and sheep. They made an awful noise with their squealing and bleating, and I often wondered whether the boys in the "gymnasium" could hear their teachers speak.

In the center of the town is the weigh-house, where one could see beneath an immense roof or awning butter in many barrels containing eighty Dutch pounds, or forty kilograms, each, and cheeses stacked in heaps.

Most of the cheeses were large, flat at the top and bottom, and round at the sides. Many of these contained clover seeds, and others had anise seeds. But there were also Edam cheeses, almost perfect balls. Some were colored red with

aniline dye, others were yellow and polished with oil.

Edam is a little town in North Holland, where first these cheeses were made. At another part of town, in the middle of the streets, on market days, one could see a row of Jewish women squatted on the ground with in front of them, on a piece of cloth, a supply of notions, dishes, and other wares that they sold. Among them were also a few men merchants, while some Jewesses were lucky enough to possess booths and stalls.

Sometimes, one of my chums, whose grandmother and uncles and aunts lived in Sneek, and I went to visit her relatives.

On one such an occasion we accompanied the maid to a little house where for a couple of cents she bought a kettleful of boiling water, and a glowing hard turf. You wonder why? It was tea-time in the afternoon. The fire was out, and it would take quite a while to

start a new one and boil water. Gas was used for lighting purposes, but at that time had not come to be used for heating. It was therefore quicker just to buy a kettle of boiling water and a hot coal on which to keep it boiling.

Sneek was also known for its many "oude jonge juffrouwen," or old maids. No other town in Friesland, in proportion, had so many.

And then there were the chimes. These were beautiful. They sounded each hour, each half hour, each quarter and each five minutes of. At the full hour, they played popular melodies with a great many bells. The Dutch are very fond of chimes and have them in the church-towers of many towns.

CHAPTER XIV

DUTCH AND FRISIAN

If Dutch were not so dreadfully guttural, it would be a euphonious language. It has a very rich vocabulary and four sounds that the English language does not have. The u or uu, which sounds like the u in French, the ui, the eu, the ei and the ij or y. The ei and ij or y are so similar that most Dutch people make no distinction. They sound more like the i in white than like any other letter in the English alphabet.

Many Americans seem to think that Dutch is the same as German. Many a time I have read broken English supposed to be spoken by Hollanders, and it was almost invariably the broken English of a German. The words *mit*, *der*, *und*, *schnaps* are German. Their Dutch equivalents are *met*, *de*, *en*, *jenever*.

And so it is with the names. There are Dutch boys called Hans, but they are very few. The name is really German. So is Gretchen ; the Dutch name for it is Grietje or Margareta. Some of the most popular Dutch names for boys are : Jan, Piet or Pieter, Dirk, Klaas, Karel (not Carl), Frits (not Fritz), Hein or Hendrik (not Heinie), Willem and Joost.

The Frisian language, spoken by the people of the villages and farms of Friesland—in the towns a queer Dutch dialect is spoken—is very much different from the Dutch. It is somewhat related to the English, as are also the characteristics and the tall stature of the people.

Some words, such as green, are identically the same ; only, the Frisian adds to the sound "ee" something like a short and quickly uttered "u." Leeuwarden and Sneek are Dutch names, as we learned them at school. Their Frisian equivalents are Ljowt (pronounce the j as y in young) and Snits.

While the Dutch pronounce the r always sharp, the Frisian, before another consonant, pronounces it like the English in a similar position, that is, very faintly. Cheese in Frisian sounds like tseese. Many other words, like butter, bread, church, field, meadow, churn, house, cow, sheep, grass, grazing, stall, sound in Frisian very similar.

The Frisians are very proud of their language. They have their own magazines and their own writers and poets whom they esteem highly. The poems are simple, and naturally, celebrate their green meadows, their farms and their outdoor life. The Frisian old-national song is beautiful, both as to melody and words, and conveys much more force and strength than the Dutch national song.

Many villages have their amateur theatrical clubs, and the village maidens and swains, the farmers' sons and daughters, give a couple of performances each winter. Some of the plays are serious, others sad,

but the comical ones, depicting some of their own ridiculous customs, and the ignorance and stupidity of isolated stay-behinds, are the best and are best acted. They are very refreshing indeed and would make you roar with laughter if you could understand them. Many a long winter evening, father used to read aloud to us some of these old plays and stories.

The Frisian people are very proud, very independent and very stubborn. Yet they are progressive. They have a horror of sentimentality and a show of affection. Parents never even kiss their children after they have grown beyond the baby stage. The Frisian motto of the Middle Ages was: "Frisia non cantat," which is Latin for "Friesland does not sing." They believed singing to be an exhibition of sentimentality, a weakness. Centuries later, however, nearly every village and town had its singing society, and so had we.

CHAPTER XV

OUR CANAL-BOATS

A NUMBER of Dutch people live in small ships on the numerous canals. One can see the skipper stand at the tiller, smoking his pipe; his son or hired man attend to the sails and his wife wash the clothes or cook the dinner on deck while the children are playing around her, carefully avoiding the flower-pots. And in the rigging, between the drying clothes, sings the canary in his cage. Everybody looks happy and the ship, clean as a pin, gleams in the sunshine.

If the wind is against them, the whole family pulls the ship, one behind the other; the wife is usually the leader, having a loop pass over her chest, and while straining forward, she pants from exertion. Only the skipper himself is on

SCENE NEAR VILLAGE OF WEIDUM, FRIESLAND.

SLOWLY LOADING SMALL CANAL BOATS AND BRIDGE

board, sitting at the tiller and calmly smoking his pipe. Most of the skippers go to the peat fields where they buy supplies of turf, load these into the holds of their ships, and sail back to their home villages where they sell the turf. They make a good living.

Our little village counted among its inhabitants two turf skippers. One of them, during the winter, lived in a house he owned and his family was therefore as comfortable as any; the other, less fortunate, had the hull of the small vessel—which, by the way, had a carrying capacity of only twenty-six tons—changed into a room, and the deck raised a couple of feet, so that one could stand up in it.

Once the youngest girl took me into this hull-room. It was quite cozy inside. The walls were like those of any entirely wainscoted and painted room. A heating stove kept it at an agreeable temperature while the snow came whirling down outside.

There was plenty of room for a table and several chairs; a rug covered the floor, lace curtains hung before the tiny windows, and the family seemed happy and contented. Their summer apartment, the cabin, was being used as a kitchen.

I wish you could see the cabin of the average turf ship. A whole family, consisting of father, mother, several children and the hired man, or perhaps two or three grown sons and daughters, have to live in it. It is so tiny that it makes you think of a doll's house.

You board the ship on an ordinary plank, so you have to watch your feet. But before doing so, if you wear wooden shoes, you will have to shake them off and leave them on the shore; if it rains or snows, you lay them on their sides so that they will not get wet inside. You walk over the shining deck to a square hole, a distance of a few steps. If the weather is raw, this hole is partly or entirely covered. You lift up the cover, and

leaning on your elbows and hands, you let your feet descend through the hole and strike the floor below.

You are now in a room of which the dimensions are no more than five feet by five, and so low that grown-up folks cannot stand up straight. Opposite the entrance, and in a recess in the wall, stands a very small cooking-stove, which is polished to perfection, and so are its brass handles and ornaments and the cooking utensils.

At each side of the stove, built into the hull, are shelves hidden from view by miniature doors. They contain the chinaware and the clothes of the family. The table takes in most of the space of the cabin, and on two sides of it stand two stools. Over the stove hangs, suspended from the ceiling, a pretty lamp with porcelain shade.

The walls are painted a dark red and shine with brightness and so does the little window with the lace curtain.

Here the family eat and drink. The wife does the washing on deck, and if the weather is favorable, and she has an extra stove, also the cooking. But just think of it, to live in such close quarters during the whole long winter when there is little work for them to do and there is much rough weather. Yet that is what many families have to do. As soon as part of the hull is cleared of turf, the available space is also used for living quarters, but nowhere have I seen it fixed up with boards and built into a veritable room as in the ship of the skipper I mentioned above.

Where, you will ask, do they sleep? Some in holes or closets at the other end of the ship, and others opposite the cabin, just beneath the deck, the opening to the hole, which during the day is closed by a door, being in the entrance to the cabin. There they sleep in a space not higher than a couple of feet.

All the canal ships had two blades or

shields, one on each side in the center of the ship's length. These could be pulled up a little, and let down. They were often washed off and tarred, like the rest of the outside of the ship, and served it in the same capacity as the fins do a fish.

CHAPTER XVI

PLAYING IN THE SNOW

Of the four seasons we liked the winter best, in spite of its many dreary days. We enjoyed throwing snowballs into the brick chimneys. Of course, mother strenuously objected to it. On one chimney, however, we were allowed to practise marksmanship, for underneath stood only the large iron pot in which food for the cows and pigs was cooked, at the end of the largest cow-barn.

In the village, the boys frequently threw snowballs into the chimneys of the peaceful villagers. One couple was the especial object of their mischief. The woman was very cranky, had no children, and therefore could not understand that the normal child cannot behave like an adult.

One of the boys, Jouke by name, happened to land a snowball through her chimney into an uncovered pot with porridge. The woman was very angry. In front of her door, in the alley, stood her husband, sawing wood. Immediately, with the saw in his hands, he started to run after Jouke. And the chase was kept up for a long time, through the streets and alleys, over and through hedges and fences, through gardens and back yards, over snow-laden bushes and around trees.

In his flight, Jouke lost his wooden shoes and he ran in his socks, but he escaped, and the irate man returned home, muttering and scolding and all out of breath, doubly angry because he had failed to wreak vengeance on the boy.

A few of the boys—the bigger ones—were very far from chivalrous, as boys should be. They not only snowballed the girls, but they often would put a small piece of brick within the ball, wet it and let it freeze. With these danger-

ous missiles they bombarded our heads, shoulders, and backs. When our schoolmaster died, and a young man took his place, we had more peace, for any boy who hurt a girl was punished by him, and he ruled us in the streets as well as in school.

CHAPTER XVII

ON SKATES

Our winters were not nearly so cold as are those of the Eastern United States. Some years there is very little opportunity to skate, or none at all, in other years about two or three weeks altogether, but when I was from twelve to fifteen years old, we had three unusually cold winters in succession. During the first we could skate for sixteen weeks. Every canal, every lake was frozen over.

One could go anywhere on skates, even cross the Zuider Zee. Such a long stretch of cold weather, however, may happen only once in a century. Yet the thermometer seldom pointed below twelve degrees, Celcius, which is ten degrees above zero, Fahrenheit.

During every winter when the ice was strong, every afternoon all children were permitted to go home at two o'clock ; but when there was any doubt about its being strong, only those who brought a note from their parents were allowed to go.

Don't imagine that we skated on wooden shoes. Sometimes, if we stayed close to the house, we did tie the skates onto our socks, but at all other times we first put on leather shoes. Our skates were flat pieces of wood, painted yellow, with iron runners underneath them, and like a swan's neck, turning up gracefully. We tied them on with leather strips or colored ribbons.

When only three years old, we received our first pair of skates, and we learned the art while pushing a child's chair in front of us. This prevented us from falling, and when we got tired we could sit down and rest.

The large stretch of low meadows, about half a mile from the village, which

meadows were inundated each winter, were the first to freeze over. There we skated, and with us were many young and middle-aged people and a few real old men and women. Business, then, was practically at a standstill. Farmers and farm-hands left the barns, mechanics the shops, tradesmen the small stores, and housewives with their daughters and maids stopped their eternal scrubbing and washing, knitting and mending. Also, the sport democratized all. Although otherwise there existed sharp lines of distinction between the different social ranks, now all mixed; those who hired help with those who were hired, those who rode in carriages with those who had to walk; women who wore golden helmets with others who had to be satisfied with silver ones.

The children and the men often played a certain game of tag on skates.

As soon as it turned dark, in the evening, every one went home. There was no

moonlight skating, at least not on the low meadows. On the canals, where people often had to skate hours to reach their destination, it was different. Some came home late.

Before the advent of the railways and the bicycle, the winter was the only time for many people in Friesland to visit their far-off friends and relatives.

All along the canals, with short distances between, stood white canvas booths, where men, women or big boys sold hot chocolate, cake, and cigars. Thus, one did not have to go hungry, and inside the booths were benches on which to rest. Three sides and usually the top were closed, while one side was open so as to let people go in and out.

Father often told us the story of a certain man of his boyhood days. That man was supposed to be the champion skater of the country. One afternoon, as he came flying along a canal, he failed to see a booth until he was right in front of

it. It was too late for him to stop, so he lifted up his legs and jumped clear over it. A couple of minutes later he returned, and seeing the woman who owned the booth pack her belongings together in the sleigh, all ready to go home, he asked her :

" *Vrouwtje*, why in such a hurry? Are you all sold out? It's still early."

She looked gloomy and troubled and answered :

" No, I'm not sold out, but there is a limit to my courage. Just a minute ago I saw the devil himself fly over my booth."

Practically every village and town had its skating club. These clubs gave a race every winter ; sometimes two races. These were for men, for women, for adult couples or for boys and girls between twelve and sixteen.

I'll describe to you one of these races held on the low meadows behind our village. At one o'clock the race started.

The track was straight, about a hundred feet long, and roped off. Around it was a much wider track, called in Dutch the "bijbaan," which means side-track. This was also roped off, and for the members of the club or for spectators who had paid the entrance fee of twenty-five or fifty Dutch cents. Children paid ten cents. A couple of men, each with a broom, kept the race-track and the side-track clean. There were two chocolate-booths, stationed near the outer ropes of the side-track.

In the morning, the racers had drawn lots, and according to their numbers, were to them their turn and their partners assigned. Only two raced at a time. They started at the beat of the drum, and raced twice or three times. The one who was defeated fell out.

When all the couples had had their turn, the better skater of the first couple had to race against the better of the second couple, and the better of the third against

the better of the fourth, and so on. The defeated ones of these couples again fell out, and the remaining ones were made up into new couples, again according to their numbers.

The one who held out longest won the first prize, and the one who held out next, the second prize, and number three the third. Thus it often happened that the winners of the second and third prizes were not at all the second and third as to quickness. Luck in the drawing of the numbers had a great deal to do with that.

In small villages, the first prize consisted usually of from twenty to thirty guilders, the second of from ten to fifteen and the third of two and a half. A guilder or gulden is forty cents in American money. The spectators on the side-track, which ran parallel with the race-track, on both sides, and around the start and the end, most times kept on skating while watching, to keep warm.

All were happy, and the scene was given a touch of gayety by the flying of the Dutch flag of red, white, and blue, and the orange pennant of the royal house.

The Frisians compete for speed only, never for grace or agility.

One day, a couple of my friends and I skated to Leeuwarden, Friesland's capital, to see a race for women. Leeuwarden had two ice clubs; one had its race-track on the low lands just outside the town, and the other on the "gracht" or moat. The latter was by far the more interesting place.

When we arrived there, we took off our skates and climbed the old city wall in the shadow of the Oldehove, the erstwhile lighthouse, of which I told you in a former chapter. From there we looked down on a gay scene indeed. Thousands of people were skating on the "bijbaan" or side-track. There was lively band music, and in the brisk breeze waved dozens of flags and pennants from

View of moat or "gracht" at Leeuwarden.

Scene in the Village of Poppingawier.

the large committee tent, from the chocolate-booths, and from poles.

At one end stood two tiny pavilions, and presently we saw come out of them two rosy-cheeked young women, who had used them for dressing-rooms. The girls wore dark, knitted waists of heavy worsted, and short knitted skirts, reaching to the knees, to match. Some young women had these of a very heavy woolen cloth. Their arms and their heads were bare.

They slowly approached the line that marked the starting-place, placed one foot on it, looked grimly and with clenched teeth at each other, and at the signal, rushed off. There was nothing slow about them then. About a hundred young women, some of them from other provinces, had come to compete for the four big prizes offered by the club. The race lasted two days, and the victor was a seventeen-year-old skipper's daughter.

The race ended, the band, followed by the committee and the prize-winners,

and a large crowd in the rear, marched through the quiet streets. The committee treated the four girls to a fine dinner, and later in the evening hundreds of city and country people attended the grand ball, which lasted until the early morning hours.

When couples skate, the man leads; he places his left hand on his back and the woman puts her right hand into his and thus skates behind him. Of course, their strokes have to be of the same length and made simultaneously. Thus the women and girls are sheltered from the cold wind to a great extent.

Schoolchildren, too, had their races, but I never won a first prize; just the same, we all had a good time on such a day.

When I was ten years old, my father took me to Harlingen to see the Zuider Zee. It was my first glimpse of the sea. Ever since I can remember I had a desire to see it, and now I was somewhat disappointed, for it looked dreary and forlorn

and gloomy and we could not see very far because of the fog. The dyke on which we walked was more interesting. Father told me that it was built mostly of logs that had been shipped from Norway. In the harbor, and in the canals intersecting the town were the funniest ships I had ever imagined. Thus far I had seen only canal ships—mere toys—and these looked wonderfully big in comparison. They had queer stems ending in carved and painted figures of mermaids!

One day, four of us girls and the hired man of the parents of one of us took a trip on skates to the eastern part of our province. There the soil is sandy and unproductive, and consequently the people are very poor. Many live principally on rye bread and potatoes. Because of the poverty, their minds have become blunted. They are coarse, rough, and often seek their solace in gin.

We saw many huts about four feet high. They were made of mud, and grass grew

on the flat roofs. They consisted of one room each and had one small window, and were dug a few feet down into the ground. Such a hut, such a pen, was the habitation of many of the poor wretches.

Yet these people, in spite of their disadvantages, in spite of many of them having to exist on dry boiled potatoes dipped in salt some winter months, have an inherent decency which prompts them to keep these huts clean and neat and cozy.

At another time, our hired man asked my parents permission to take me out for a trip. As I was only a child, the permission was granted. We skated many miles, and on our return trip darkness overtook us while we were crossing the Lake of Sneek. It was blowing hard and the snow was drifting.

We skated at intervals through a few feet of snow and over a few feet of the shiniest of shiny ice. The path we had to follow was marked off with tree branches.

It was so dark, however, that we could hardly see them.

We lost our way. Once I fell, flat on my nose, into a deep pile of snow, my cap falling off and blowing away. The man had a hard time finding and chasing it. Finally we arrived at a village, far from our destination. However, it was there that we regained our bearings.

At last, very tired, half-frozen, and hungry, we arrived at Sneek. There we entered an inn, appeased our appetite, warmed our hands and feet and rested. By the time we arrived home, it was late indeed.

Often three or four of us girls would skate to different towns and villages, to watch a race or more often just to see the places. Sometimes as many boys went with us, and we skated in couples. We would leave home as early as nine or ten in the morning, and take several sandwiches along. We would skate all day, see numerous towns and villages, have

lots of fun, and at about five or six in the evening we'd be home again, very stiff and tired and happy.

All along the canals, at regular intervals, men were stationed. They had been appointed by their municipalities, to the job of sweeping the ice with a heather broom and keeping it clean. While the skaters passed, they usually dropped a cent. Thus the sweepers made good wages.

When the thaw had set in, it was great fun to cut the ice with an ax into squares of about three or four feet, and we would run along the width or even the length of a ditch, stepping from "schots," as we called such a block of ice, upon "schots." This had to be done quickly, for the moment you stepped on the schots, down it would go. Often the ice was so soft that an ax was not necessary for the making of schotsen. They would break off while we were running over them. In that case they were

irregular and many of them were very small. This "schotsen loopen," or running over the squares of ice, was a very dangerous amusement.

CHAPTER XVIII

LEGENDS AND ANECDOTES

My father was a good story-teller and enjoyed very much telling us children of the amusing happenings he had heard of or seen when he was a child or young man himself. The following is one of the stories he used to tell us. I shall call it

Taught by a Dog

The people of the town of Dokkum were supposed to be very stupid. Once upon a time a number of them were seated in an inn, in a semicircle around the fireplace. It was cold and many turfs had been heaped upon the hearth. The fire was bright and the room warm.

At last it became too warm for the men. One of them placed a fresh supply of turfs on the burning ones, and this, at first, dimmed the glow considerably.

After a while, however, when these, too, had caught fire, it became hotter than before. Therefore, another man added a new supply, and again they felt comfortable. Their comfort lasted but a few minutes, though, for now it was getting hotter than ever.

Again a bunch of turfs was thrown on the flames and once more they felt contented. But their happiness was short-lived. In a short while the heat had become almost unbearable. As they knew only one way of lessening it, which was the way they had been practising, and as this appeared to give them but a few moments of respite, with an ever-increasing misery sure to follow, they were at their wits' end what to do.

Finally one of the men, near whom a dog was lying, noticed that, as the heat was growing more intense, the animal was moving farther away from it.

Suddenly a light went up in the man's befogged brain. He smiled knowingly.

After pushing his chair back, he felt to his great relief that the heat no longer annoyed him, and the others followed his example.

The Farmer and His Ponies

Another story father told us is the following: When he was a child there lived near the same village an old farmer who had two ponies of which he was very proud and very fond. They drove him to the market at Sneek on Tuesdays and to Leeuwarden on Fridays.

One day he heard rumors of people migrating to a far-off country called America, where one lived in plenty and luxury. To get there, he was told, one had to sail for weeks in a large ship across the sea.

He thought if he were twenty years younger, he would have liked to go there, only he did not take a fancy to water. He had a talk with the old schoolmaster, the oracle of the village, to whom he broached

the idea of going to America in his carriage drawn by the two ponies.

"Why, man," said the teacher, "you could not do that, for you'd have to cross the Atlantic Ocean."

"I'd drive around it," said the farmer.

"You couldn't do that either."

"Why not?"

"Well, you simply could not. It's too wide."

"Huh," sneered the old man scornfully, "for my two ponies?"

"Yes, my good man, the sea would be in your way, and besides, there are the mountains; you couldn't cross them; they reach as high as the skies."

"I'd drive around them, too."

"And impenetrable wildernesses and forbidden deserts."

"And I'd drive around them. It might take me a long time, but I'd reach America all right with my two ponies."

No matter what difficulties the school-

master named, our old farmer firmly believed that his two ponies were able to drive him around any and all of them.

The German Charlatan

When father was a young farmer, he had working for him for several years, during the hay harvest, an old German who was brighter, and better-educated than most men of his class at that time.

He was also a queer sort of fellow. He would take a pin, mutter a prayer or whatever it was while rubbing his bare leg, and stick the pin into it. Now, this leg was of real flesh and blood and the pin was thick and two inches long. Yet it did not seem to hurt him at all and it never caused even as much as one drop of blood to flow. My father, who was very sceptical, watched him closely, but never could he understand how the man did it.

One day father suggested: "Try it on me," but the man refused, saying:

"It is Saint Peter and Saint Paul who are doing this. You don't believe in them, and so they won't do it for you." And that was all father ever could get out of him, and until this day father has been unable to see through the old man's trickery.

The following is a very old legend:

The Woman of Stavoren

Stavoren, now a dead, or rather, sleepy little town, was once one of the most famous Hansa cities. The Hansa or Hanseatic League was in the Middle Ages an association of the merchants of eighty-five towns in Northern Europe, for mutual safety and the protection of their trade.

Stavoren lies on the Zuider Zee and its situation for trading with other countries was very favorable. It is said that its merchants grew so rich that they had the stoops in front of their houses made of gold.

There lived a wealthy widow, whose ships sailed to every port and brought her treasures from all over the then known world. Her riches made her proud and arrogant, and she tried to outdo all the other merchants.

One day she told one of her captains to go and procure the most precious article he could find. The captain pondered long and seriously. He sailed to different lands and at last decided upon loading his vessel with the finest wheat he had seen, in a city on the Baltic Sea.

When, upon his return, his mistress asked him what he had brought home, he showed her the wheat with which the ship was filled. She looked at him with scorn and cried: "Is this the most precious thing you could find? Wheat? Do I have among my captains one so stupid as not to be able to find anything far more valuable? Go, throw it overboard, all of it, this minute!"

The captain looked at her in astonish-

ment. "This wheat is the best the world produces," he ventured to say. "If you do not care to keep it, let me give it to the poor. Many could be fed with it. To throw it into the sea might bring punishment on your head and reduce you to poverty." (In Netherland, to throw away food, even a crust or a few crumbs, is considered one of the greatest sins.)

At this the widow became very angry. She took a beautiful ring from her fingers, threw it into the sea and said: "As surely as I shall never see this ring again, so surely shall I never want." Then she once more commanded the captain to do as she had bidden, and quailing before the anger of the powerful woman, he emptied the contents of the ship into the harbor.

The following day the widow was to have fish for dinner. While she was ordering her servants about, one of the cooks came running towards her. He

seemed very excited and had a large fish in his hands. Tremblingly he showed it to her, and what should she find in its stomach? Her ring. At the sight she paled. She thought of her words. That same day she received the news that one of her ships had been wrecked in a storm. In the days and weeks to come similar tidings reached her.

In a few months every one of her vessels had been wrecked and their cargoes lost. She had to sell her beautiful house and costly furniture. And she died in poverty. At the spot where the wheat had been dumped into the harbor is now a shoal which is called Vrouwenzand, meaning woman's sand. On it grows a strange weed resembling wheat except that it never bears fruit.

The Eccentric Farmer's Wife

Now I must tell you about an eccentric farmer's wife who lived near our village. She was wealthy and very peculiar. Her

best room was cleaned and dusted every week, yet no one but herself and her favorite daughter were allowed to enter for fear of soiling it. One of her sons, at the age of twelve, told the schoolmaster that he had never even peeked into this room.

Only once, on the occasion of a great celebration, was it used. Then actually guests were allowed to sit in it. She had six rooms besides the kitchen. One of them, during the winter, was used as a living-room and a few others did service as bedrooms. Yet, in the summer time, when the cows were in the meadows and their barns scrubbed and painted, she had a part of the main cow-barn, or a part of the "schuur" partitioned off and this she used as a living-room.

Each of her daughters was presented with one new dress every year. But this new dress was not worn the first twelve months. No, indeed. For a whole summer and an autumn and a winter and a

spring it hung in a closet for the mother to look at when she felt like it. During the next year, the girl was permitted to wear it a few times. By the third year, when the seams and the hems had to be let out, she wore it on Sundays, and in the fourth year, to school.

One day we saw this farmer's wife parade all around her house and yard, dressed up in all her finery. Was she going out? No, she was not. Was she expecting visitors? She would not have gone to such trouble for the Queen herself. No, she was airing her clothes.

CHAPTER XIX

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

When it was anybody's birthday, the whole family was treated to an extra large piece of hard koek with the coffee at ten in the morning. In fact, the piece of koek was a fourth of a whole koek and a whole koek measured at least a yard. It was, however, thin and narrow. If a child, the one whose birthday it was had the piece of koek tied to his arm.

My birthday being on the ninth of January, on the following Sunday I was usually allowed to have a party. Only girls were invited, about half a dozen, and they arrived early in the afternoon and stayed until eight or nine in the evening.

Sometimes a couple of boys came to

fetch their sisters home and stayed for an hour or so. We drank first tea and ate cookies, and later had hot chocolate and three kinds of bread, buns, cookies, rusks, cheese, and candy. We looked at picture-books (children's books were not quite so plentiful then as they are now), pretty prints, sang school songs, gave riddles and solved them, and played various games.

At one time we decided to give a play in the barn. I had written a little sketch for two, which my girl friend and I studied and rehearsed. I also outlined a couple of other sketches for my younger brother, his chum who was of my age, and myself. The two boys made the stage and placed a few rows of seats in front of it. We helped them some. We charged a couple of pennies admission, I believe, of the grown-ups. The children, who were the guests at my party, were free, of course.

Finally, when all was ready, and

the spectators had taken their seats, the curtain was raised and we started. At first all went well. Later came the act where my brother's chum, called Marten, had to creep between the floor of the barn and the planks of the stage. In his hands he held a cat. In the floor of the stage was a false door that the audience was not supposed to be able to see. I was dressed in my mother's hoop-skirt, taken down from the attic for the occasion, and over it hung a very wide petticoat mother had also worn when a young girl. In my hand I waved a staff. After much walking back and forth and making a "spiel," I went to the rear of the stage near the box. I lifted it, and holding it up to the audience for examination, I proved to them that it was perfectly empty.

Then I started to say: "Okus, pokus, knipzak," the three words of mystery of the Dutch jugglers. But before I could say "knipzak," I heard from beneath the

planks the cry of a frightened boy, the screams of a still more frightened cat, and the next moment pussy darted upon the stage, unceremoniously crossed it as fast as she could, jumped among the audience who were glad to clear the way for her, and disappeared in the recesses of the barn.

A few seconds later, Marten crawled from beneath the stage, his hands and face scratched and bleeding and he himself muttering all sorts of imprecations against my favorite cat.

We were very fond of play-acting. Yet a couple of vaudeville shows, seen at the time of the kermis at Leeuwarden, comprised the whole extent of my acquaintance with real theatres. One winter, in the barn-like shop of a carpenter, this man's son, a mere boy of our age, was kind enough to build a stage for us; I wrote a little play for four girls, and besides, from my book with illustrated songs to be delivered by children, we each

learned a tune and the accompanying words. We dressed up in suitable clothes, charged a couple of cents admission and had a jolly time.

CHAPTER XX

MY DREAMS OF THE FUTURE

At the age of fourteen I quit the village school. My request that I might attend the normal school at Sneek with a view to becoming a teacher was not granted, the principal reason for the refusal being that the normal school hours were very irregular and often late at night, which would necessitate my staying over night in Sneek. Besides, it was my parents' desire that I should follow in the footsteps of the many generations of farmers' daughters before me, and that I should do as other farmers' daughters of my village were doing, namely: learn to keep house, to milk cows, to make butter, to have a farmer boy for sweetheart and to become a farmer's wife.

Now it happened that I would have

none of this. But I did not beg or nag or anything of the kind. I had dreams and ambitions. The dreams were magnificent, the ambitions gigantic. How I used to enjoy sitting in the grass at the water's edge, thinking of my quiet, unchanging surroundings, of the uneventful, monotonous existences of the people among whom I lived.

The lovelier the day was, the sweeter the birds sang, the stronger I felt the draw and pull of the wonderful, big, beautiful world outside. Why should I live my life as my mother was living hers? Up at four or half-past each morning. All day making butter, cooking, cleaning, polishing, knitting, with few people to see and fewer books to read. Working, working, working, little respite, little recreation, no variety, and with for greatest pleasure the riding to town in the tilbury, at the side of the husband, the envy of the village women, who had to trudge on foot.

And the mountains and forests and oceans would forever be unseen by me. Others might enjoy the works of beauty of nature, and the works of beauty of genius, but I was to content myself with a hopeless, endless, deadening longing only. Was I really? Indeed I was not. Others had been able to fight their way from fettering surroundings and circumstances, and so could I.

At one time I decided to become an explorer, like Stanley and Livingstone. I wanted to go to darkest Africa, to the jungles of India. Of course, I was only a child and had to grow up first. But, though I changed my plans occasionally, the mainspring remained fixed firmly and immutably; I wanted to travel. As we were not wealthy, it would mean that I should have to make my living and the money to travel with at the same time. My parents and older sisters tried to discourage me again and again. They told me of the impossibility of my plans; that,

being a child, I could not understand yet what the difficulties were for a young woman roaming alone through the wicked world, but their advice did not in the least waver my resolution.

Strange to say, often I did not seem to think of myself as a girl, but as a boy. For instance, I liked variety and a life of sameness seemed to me dreadful, and I wanted to get all out of life there was to be gotten out of it. So at one time I thought, when grown up I should try all the trades, be a carpenter, a blacksmith, a cooper, a sailor, a baker, etc., successively and each one for a short time only.

I read biographies of great men and wanted to emulate them. My hero and example was always a man, never a woman, and this has been so with me all through life. Yet I was not a tomboy, due perhaps to my not being very robust. Neither did I regret my being a girl ; on the contrary, I was proud and glad of it, but I believed myself to be on a perfect

equality with boys and having the same rights. This was undoubtedly due to my great love for freedom.

Yes, I did, once upon a time, have a heroine whom I took for example. She was the aunt of one of my chums. I had never had the pleasure of seeing the lady face to face, but I had seen several photographs of her and my little friend told stories of her, which, to my young mind, seemed wonderful. This aunt was a school-teacher in Java, Holland's most valuable colonial possession and one of the beauty-spots of the world. I made up my mind that I wanted to become a teacher or governess and laid my plans accordingly.

After I left the village school, I received twice a week lessons in fancy-work from our woman-teacher. Besides, whenever I could snatch a few moments between my household duties I studied French, English, and German without a teacher.

In July my father decided to have my sister Anna and me study English from a private teacher. When I was only ten years old, our oldest brother had gone to the United States. My sister, too, was anxious to go. Father said: "If you want to go, very well, but being a girl, you had better study English first, and be prepared." So it came that we two trudged five miles to Sneek, and five miles back, each Wednesday and Saturday, to receive a two-hour lesson in English from a very nice lady-teacher.

On the twenty-fourth of August our parents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. We had decorated our immense front-room with evergreens and flowers. Many relatives and friends came for dinner and in the evening nearly the whole village. Even the vast room could not contain them, so that the young people separated from the older ones and filled the living-room. Father and mother sat at the head of the long

table in the front-room, in a bower of green decorated with silver.

Everybody drank many cups of tea and coffee and "boerejongens," which are cooked raisins steeped in brandy and seasoned with spices and sweetened with sugar. We ate rusks, several different kinds of bread and meat and cheese, and above all a great many large jelly-tarts, layer-cakes and cakes filled with raisins and currants.

The young people danced in the barn, and the old folks talked and chattered. All sang and laughed, and some of the young guests added to the general hilarity by reciting comical monologues and dialogues. And the fun lasted till four o'clock in the morning.

My sister and I studied English for about a year. The following August she went to the United States. I did not go with her because I was yet too young, and also because my heart was still set on India.

About that time there was brought about a great change in the conducting of our dairy. We discontinued the making of butter and cheese and thenceforth sold our milk to one of the many creameries, that, bright and pretty, nestled among trees and were surrounded by flower-beds, in many villages and towns.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WEDDING

For many generations, for hundreds of years, perhaps for more than a thousand years, it has been the custom for the young people of the villages, small towns, and farms of our province to get married in the month of May. Those who marry in other months are the exceptions to the rule.

So it happened that the following spring my oldest sister married in the happy month of May. Two weeks before the date set for the wedding, her fiancé went to the town-hall and notified the magistrate of his intention to marry my sister, and from that time until after the wedding the two were called bride

and groom. After the wedding they were husband and wife.

The following Sunday, according to ancient custom, the policeman in front of the town-hall, with loud voice, called off their names, saying that they intended to get married, and he asked the good people of the village whether they had any objection. Of course, they had none. The second Sunday the policeman repeated this.

In the meantime, on the first Sunday, many people in our village and on the farms, in honor of the bride and groom, had the flag out, the Dutch red-white-and-blue. Even the windmills were adorned with flags. We had the big front-room and the living-room decorated with greens and flowers.

Several of the groom's nearest relatives and some of our own came early in the morning for the whole day. In the afternoon and evening many invited friends came. We had tea all afternoon, "boere-

jongens" and cookies at from about four o'clock until six, after that coffee and "kook" and then again more "boere-jongens," with all sorts of cakes and tarts, big and small.

During the night, coffee was made, and there were dishes with different kinds of bread, meat, cheese, and rusks, and those guests who were about to leave first partook of them. The tables were never empty. There was singing and dancing, games were played and some of the guests delivered comical recitations. The handles of the cups of the bride and groom had been decorated with ribbons, also the stems of their glasses.

Every boy and man present smoked an old-fashioned Gouda clay pipe; at least the first couple of hours; afterwards it was no longer inconsistent with good form to smoke a cigar. The pipe of the groom was about a yard long—I mean the stem, the bowl being of the ordinary size—and it was all decorated with arti-

ficial flowers. He was very careful with it that he might prevent it from breaking all through the days of merrymaking, and save it as a souvenir for the rest of his life. Such a pipe is used only during the wedding celebrations.

As you know, the Dutch are extremely fond of smoking; a man who does not smoke is considered effeminate by them. No young girl will accept the attentions of a young man who does not smoke or who turns sick in the effort.

The following Sunday the groom's parents, who lived in another village, invited their relatives, the young man's friends, and also all of us. Father, mother, my brother, and we girls all went, and about the same sort of festivities took place there as had been enjoyed at our house.

But don't think that on the other days, the week-days, life was lived in its usual, quiet way. Far from it. Some days the groom had to spend at our home, for there

were still more parties, as a number of friends had been unable to come on Sunday, and therefore came during the week. At all these celebrations the bride wore a pretty, but colored dress, called the bride's dress. Of course, most of the guests brought or sent presents.

The second Thursday was the wedding day. Now my sister donned her wedding gown, which was black. At about ten in the morning the bridal procession started for our town-hall, in a neighboring village belonging to the same "gemeente" or municipality.

The bride and groom, seated in a tilbury and with their horse decorated with flowers and ribbons, led the procession. My parents, my brother and I in our carriage, followed; then came the groom's parents and several other relatives in their vehicles.

Soon after we entered the town-hall, the parents of both bride and groom had to sign a document in token of their consent

to the marriage. If the young people had been past thirty years of age, this would not have been necessary. Young men and young women in Netherland are not supposed to be able to choose wisely as long as they are under thirty. Not that they don't choose for themselves; they always do, but being in love they are likely to be blind and therefore are not permitted to take the most serious step in their lives without the consent of their parents. In all other respects young people became of age at twenty-three, at the time I was still at home.

After the signing of the papers by the parents, our burgomaster performed the marriage ceremony, which was witnessed from the open doors by an inquisitive village crowd. Neither the ring nor the license was part of the ceremony. Both husband and wife wear a wedding ring; not a plain band but a pretty ring with diamond or other stone, but these rings are not used in the ceremony.

To marry secretly is impossible there, and it is just as impossible to deceive the magistrates as to one's age. Such things as elopement and bigamy are in the minds of the people relegated to the Middle Ages. One reads of them as one reads of tales of knights and the attacking and defending of castles; they belong to the romantic past.

After the ceremony, the whole procession returned to our house. There a big dinner was awaiting us. The rest of the day was spent quietly and early in the evening the young couple went to their new home.

In Netherland, weddings performed by preachers and priests would not be lawful. Many do perform such ceremonies, but not until after the civil marriage has taken place, and they are called "benedictions" and not weddings. In the larger towns and cities, such benedictions often take place in church right after the wedding at the town-hall. In small towns

and villages this usually happens the following Sunday, but many people, especially where I lived, entirely dispensed with them.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW I CONTINUED MY STUDIES

Our village church, which was the liberal branch of the Dutch Reformed Church, and similar to the American Unitarian, owned a little free library of fiction and more serious reading. Every Saturday evening, during the winter, the librarian, who was also the sexton, exchanged the books for the men, women, and children who wished to make use of the library, in the Bible class room, where the books were kept.

With true liberal spirit, the church granted the same privileges to the people of other faiths as to its own members. Every Saturday I used to get books for my aged grandmother as well as for other members of our family and myself. I remember how I enjoyed reading parts

of the big volumes of the Dutch edition of "The Earth and Her Peoples."

I was so fond of reading that quite frequently it happened that when my mother had told me to sweep, dust and polish the front-room, I would open a book and start reading "just for a minute." But I would keep on reading, forgetting all about the work, and two or three hours later mother would find me still reading and the work undone. Once, after dinner, I started to read instead of washing the dishes, and by four o'clock the dishes were still dirty.

I also resumed my studies of French and German, without a teacher, and I took up a little Italian. I studied while I worked, and this is what did me more harm than anything else. It prevented the thorough digestion of my food, and I was a hearty eater in spite of the fact that my stomach was weak and had given me a good deal of trouble from infancy.

I read mostly French, till ten o'clock at night. I often was so sleepy that I

had to wet my eyes to keep them open and force my mind to work though it was too weary to comprehend the meaning of the words. I had always been a light sleeper, and when in bed it took me about an hour to get asleep.

Yet the next morning at four I forced myself to wake up, and, half-frozen, would sit up in bed reading by the flickering light of a single candle.

I contracted rheumatism in my arms and neuralgia in my chest. But I did not complain. Then one day my heart started to flutter, first part of the time it fluttered, later it fluttered all the time; it never seemed to stop fluttering. Yet I did not complain. To drown the strange, irritating sensation I continually moved my toes while I was seated. I became very thin and pale, but as I did not complain, no one grew alarmed.

One night I suddenly awoke. A loud, grating noise rasped through my chest while my heart pounded violently.

Frightened I jumped out of bed. But I did not call any one. Gradually it subsided. The following night the same thing happened. After that, many, many nights I dreaded going to bed. Sleep had become possessed with horror to me. Fortunately, the sensation was never repeated in so strong a form. I concluded that I had heart disease. Now, I had often heard the village people say that heart disease was incurable. Therefore, why should I go to a doctor? If I complained to my parents, they would undoubtedly put a stop to my reading, and that would never do!

By some strange reasoning I figured out that I would have only three more years to live. And those three years I was determined to enjoy, and to enjoy meant to read. I noticed, however, that I could no longer study as easily and quickly as I used to. And to think that people had told me that pale, thin children are always brighter and

quicker in their studies than healthy children! Oh, the crime of ignorance! It was my nervous condition that was at fault; it made concentration very difficult. I had become morose and irritable. The only pleasures I still enjoyed were skating and dancing, and these had become very trying to my weakened body.

Yet I hungered for pleasures. I longed to go to theatres and concerts, the opportunities for which were lacking. The simple pleasures of farmers and villagers, such as parties, visits, going to town, the kermis, had lost all attraction and interest for me. The company of my former playmates now bored me. The books I had read, my ambitions, my dreams had estranged me from them. Nearly all their thoughts and their talk centered around finery and boys. There were very few points of common interest left between us. Also, my strong sense of justice and love for freedom rebelled against the domination of woman by man.

Once, when I was taking a walk on a Sunday afternoon with two or three other farmers' daughters, one of them remarked casually :

" My father and the boys often play cards these long winter evenings after the cows have been fed and milked, but mother and we girls never play, for, as father says, we can always find something to do."

The way she said this proved that she entirely agreed with her father. And just because her mother and the girls were ingenious enough to be able always to find socks and stockings to darn, coats and trousers and skirts and dresses to mend, or crocheting and knitting to do, recreation was not for them. I, however, believed it to be best not to speak my thoughts.

When I was seventeen, I passed the entrance examination to the second grade of the " Hooger Burger School " at Sneek for the studies of French, German and

Dutch literature. This meant that I had a knowledge of French equal to that gained in two school years, and a knowledge of German equal to that gained in one school year, and a fair knowledge of Dutch grammar and literature.

A Hooger Burger School is a secondary school with either three or five grades. Ours had five. The studies taught are Dutch, French, German, English, mathematics, history, geography, chemistry, physics, bookkeeping, drawing and a few others.

Most of the boys attending take all the studies, which, in the end, entitles them to a diploma. Many of them, later, enter commercial life, others go to the Polytechnical School at Delft, again others enter the Navigation School or the Marine Engineering School. Some obtain positions in the post-offices and again others enter the school for veterinary surgeons.

Most of the girls attending the Hooger Burger School take up part of the cur-

riculum. Some are normal school students who some day hope to become teachers.

Opposite our Higher Burger School, with the canal between, stood the "Gymnasium" or classical secondary school. There Dutch, French, German, English, Latin, Greek, and to some also Hebrew, were taught, besides many other studies; and every one of these was compulsory. Few girls attended the school. The boys were too busy to have debating, dramatic, or other clubs. Their studying meant work, hard work. After six years of grind, they, and also a few of the girls, went to the Universities to study medicine and surgery, theology, law, higher mathematics, or science.

Well, six days a week I walked ten miles to school and back, while each day I had from one to three hours' instruction.

One day, when on my way, I stopped and leisurely returned home. I now told

my father, for the first time, that my heart so pounded, that my body was so weary, that my muscles so twitched—I, in my ignorance called it the shocking of the arteries—that I could no longer go on. So father told me to see a doctor. The result of the visit was that from now on I walked each day two miles to a station, took the train to Sneek and each afternoon walked home the same distance from the station. I was allowed to continue my studies.

At the end of a year I passed the examination to the third grade, but it was deemed advisable for me to leave school, as the condition of my health had but little improved.

A few more years passed by. I spent a great deal of my time outdoors, and I never did any hard work. I could not give up the books altogether. I continued to read English, German, and French. I studied algebra and Latin. With the study of Latin I was assisted

by a boy friend who attended the "Gymnasium." My sister in America had been sending me the "Youth's Companion" and copies of the "Ladies' Home Journal" and other magazines. She also sent me an illustrated History of the United States, Tennyson's "Idyls of the King," Whittier's Poems and an English-Latin dictionary.

It was at this time of my life that I gave up the idea of going to India. I was told that it would be impossible for me ever to live in a tropical country. Anyway, my parents were very much opposed to my going there. I was told that beautiful, unhealthy Java contained the grave of many a Dutchman lured to its shores by promised riches or adventure.

In one of our daily papers each week I read an interesting article by a Dutch journalist in Paris, and I was now seized with an ambition to become a journalist. As such, I thought, I could see the world and make a living at the same time. I

wrote a couple of short stories, which were published in a monthly comic magazine, and also a few lengthy anecdotes which I had translated from the English.

My discontent grew steadily. My little world had become a great deal too small for me. The monotony of my life had become very oppressive.

Finally, after many futile efforts, I found a suitable position, and from my savings was enabled to come to America. I met with much opposition from my parents, mainly because I was not strong.

When the day arrived for me to go to Amsterdam, where I was to find employment, my folks said they hoped I would be so seasick while crossing the Zuider Zee that I would be scared into refusing the position. Well, I was seasick, but it did not in the least frighten me. I enjoyed the visit to Amsterdam. It was the first time I had ever been in a really big city and on a street-car—and it was a horse-car at that—and I was twenty-one.

CHAPTER XXIII

CROSSING THE OCEAN

My desire to see more of the world, and thoroughly to familiarize myself with the English language, led me to leave Holland.

I wanted to see Antwerp, and by observation be able to compare one large city with another. After a short stay in Antwerp I took passage on the steamer *Vaderland.*

Most of the passengers were Americans, especially those of the first cabin. I immediately took a liking to them. I liked the independence and democratic attitude of the American women, although sometimes they shocked my Dutch sense of propriety very much, especially by their carelessness and wastefulness.

What puzzled me was that quite a number of first-class passengers spoke incorrect English, that is to say, they made grammatical errors. Why did they say "don't" instead of "does not," "will" when they should have said "shall," "was" for "were," "I" for "me," and "me" for "I"? Dutch people of wealth and refinement make no such mistakes in the grammar of their language.

Another thing that puzzled me was that some first-class women passengers showed by the roughness of their hands that they had done menial work, and there were others who washed their handkerchiefs and other articles of clothing themselves and hung these in their staterooms to dry; some even blackened their shoes themselves. In Holland, ladies who travel first-class don't wash clothes or blacken shoes.

I had yet to learn that in America, especially in the West, much menial work is performed by women who, if

living in similar circumstances in Holland, would keep one or two servants. In Holland, their social standing would simply demand this, even if an insufficient income might make it necessary for them to do injustice to their appetites.

I loved the ocean; I loved it in its every mood. And I loved my independence, and the sight of the New World!

I stayed a few days in New York with friends, and one day we went rowing in Central Park. Miss V. R., who had often rowed on a lake near Rotterdam, her native city, was to handle the oars. Miss H. and I disclaimed any familiarity with them. But Dutch rowboats are different from American rowboats and are rowed in a different way. Miss V. R. simply could not manage the boat. It was going forward when, according to her, it should go backward, and backward when it should go forward; it went sideways when it should go straight, and it had a very unpleasant habit of getting

into collision with other boats. And it threatened continually to topple over.

Poor Miss V. R., crestfallen and ashamed, suggested that the stout and strong Miss H. take her place and do the rowing, but Miss H., who had been a stewardess on an Atlantic liner, flushed with anger, snapped: "For goodness' sake, sit still and don't try to upset the boat. Do you suppose that after having crossed the ocean each month for years, I want to get drowned in a little bit of water like this?"

Surely, the lake would have been an ignoble grave for such an old salt.

In the meantime a crowd was gathering on the opposite shore. Some of the young men shouted their advice to us, telling us how we should handle the oars. And Miss V. R. in the excitement forgot the little English she knew and shouted back in Dutch that she was doing the best she could. Finally, the boatman came to our rescue.

We also went to Coney Island and watched the bathers. We were very much shocked at seeing women and also men in their bathing-suits walking on the beach! In Holland one is driven in a coach drawn by horses into the surf and fetched back in the same manner. The bather never exposes herself to the public. I remember among these Coney Island bathers one particularly fat woman. How often we laughed afterwards at the recollection of her!

After enjoying the sights of New York, I took the train for Chicago, stopping at Niagara Falls for one of the happiest days in my life. It was in the latter part of November and the Falls had donned their winter costume. The effect of the sun shining on the frozen spray on the bending tree-branches was marvelous and bewildering. All day I walked around there, all alone. The show-place of Eastern United States was deserted.

I reached Chicago on Thanksgiving

Day, and spent three weeks visiting uncles, aunts, cousins, and old-time friends.

On New Year's Eve I boarded the Santa Fé train for San Francisco. In spite of my being car-sick, I enjoyed the trip immensely and especially the big, bleak desert, which held a peculiar fascination for me. Four days later, precisely at six o'clock in the evening, I greeted my sister at the Ferry Building in San Francisco. I immediately took a great liking to this fair city and its climate.

A few days after my arrival I was enrolled as a pupil of a prominent business college.

It has never been my ambition to accumulate money or property, for which characteristic I have been much criticized by people to whom happiness means something widely different from what it means to me. Fortunately, their criticism has never done any harm, as I have not permitted it to interfere with my pursuit of what constitutes my par-

ticular notion of happiness, to wit: the humble acquisition of a little knowledge and the enjoyment of the beautiful in nature and all lines of art.

I have been in many places and localities and have found the greatest contentment where I can hear the thunder of the ocean's mighty waves, where the flowers always bloom, and where I can wander through mountains and hills and forests. That is why I love California.

THE END

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